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LUCK AND FATE.

BY SADIE BEATTY.

Talk of the luck of the luckless!
There is no such thing as luck;
When brave men win the battle,
It is not luck, but pluck.

Talk of the blows unnumbered,
Dealt by the hand of fate!
A fig for such idle whining
When fortune lingers late.

Fate! who ever saw her?
There is no such thing as fate;
And they who court Dame Fortune
Must labor on and wait.

Luck and fate are the pillars
All cowards hide behind,
Because when the mill is ready
They will not go and grind.

With hearts that are ever willing
To answer labor's call,
Faith is all that is needed,
While God is over all.

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XXI.

And Earle Templeton was once more whispering pretty nothings into the ears of a woman. He was outwardly the same man that he had been a year before; but one could not have found more diametrical antagonisms of thought and feeling amongst the inhabitants of the antipodes. We were about to say that he had discarded all feeling, but in a general sense it would have been grossly unjust. To one of his strong, silent, passionate nature that would have been impossible.

He had never known how well he loved Carroll Tressylian until the latter had been snatched away from him in so sudden and fearful a manner, and then his grief had been frightful too. There were no outward tears to scald the pale face, they would have been a weakness of his past life, but they had dried on his heart and withered it.

If the law had not taken vengeance on Ralph Thornton, there is no telling what this man in his strong resentment would have done; but the public sense of retribution had been equal to the emergency, and the murderer had paid the highest penalty that could be enacted. There was nothing to be done, then, but to put down all useless regrets, and in his marvellous strength of character Earle Templeton had done this.

Not but that there were great agonizing death-throes sometimes—longings for the touch of that noble, generous hand, for the sound of the smooth, cheerful, encouraging voice. Men can live without these things sometimes—women cannot; but to man's happiness they are essential. Therefore Earle Templeton, in the midst of all his outward successes, was not happy.

"To live down" all strong emotion had been his daily watchword since his introduction to the reader. Had he succeeded? Success had crowned him in all his other efforts. We shall see how he came out in this.

He was a strategist, a politician, a statesman in the true sense of the word. Endowed with singular powers of persuasion, in word, voice and manner, from peer he was rapidly rising to undisputed sovereignty amongst the ablest of the nation. Patrician as any lord of the land, nature or herculean labor, we know not which, had taught him that hardest lesson of life—the "sine qua non" of all successful great men—to maintain a rigid individuality, and yet adapt himself to his individual constituency, the gift "ad captandum vulgus" that will elevate some men despite all frowns of fortune, that elevated Cromwell to the dictatorship in England, and Napoleon to the imperial purple of France.

Carroll Tressylian, the father, brother, friend of his youth, being then removed, Earle Templeton's course was more solitary than ever. He had a polite word and a smile for all men—they were, as we have said, the talismanic charms by which he bound them to him; but as for intimates, bosom confidants, he had none. Perhaps if that rare smile of his had softened toward one man more than another of late, it had been toward James Barrycourt, the opposing attorney in the Thornton-Tressylian murder case. He had recognized the germs of unusual talent in Barrycourt, and remembering how difficult his own road might have been but for the strong hand that had guided him, he held out his own to his struggling brother; and wherever aid could be delicately tendered, he had given it. And Barrycourt, truly grateful, had repaid him with a devotion almost womanly in its tenderness. The latter was oftener than any other man at Templeton's office, and the two were sometimes seen attending the courts together, or in times of leisure visiting the club-rooms and places of public amusement.

It was at this juncture that an unknown Spaniard, Juan Alvarez by name, who turned out to be a modern Croesus, became involved in a painfully annoying litigation at N——.

Alvarez, the defendant, could scarcely speak a dozen words of English. Templeton had been recommended as the most energetic, as well as the most brilliant barrister of the place, and had been engaged with the most distinguished, because the most unhoped-for success.

Alvarez was profuse in protestations of gratitude, presented his son, Don Sebastian Alvarez, a young man of exquisite polish and cultivation, whom Templeton found a most agreeable acquaintance, and begged the privilege of introducing him to his daughter, the only remaining member of his family, at his private residence. For some time Templeton had declined this honor, under the plea of pressing engagements. At last, however, accident had brought about what design might never have accomplished.

DR. GEORGE CHESTER RECEIVES A DREADFUL LETTER.

"OH, MY GOD!" HE CRIED, "SHE HAS BEEN MADE TO BELIEVE A CRUEL LIE, AND HAS WRECKED ALL OUR LIVES. I WILL TEAR HER FROM HIS ARMS, AND SLAY HIM AT HER FEET."

The elder Alvarez had inquired into Templeton's antecedents. Testimonials of a spotless character and undisputed reputation for intellect were everywhere abundant. He had no great sources of wealth to fall back upon that he knew of, but there were Bourbons in the same condition. The first thing to be looked at was to what family of Templetons he belonged.

Carroll Tressylian had been the only man in N—— that had ever known this, and Carroll Tressylian was dead. Once get a man into the tide of public favor, however, and his course is resistless, for a time at least. The weaker yield to the dominant spirit, and prostrate themselves as idolators before the Juggernaut.

An amiable sycophant had half-jocularly announced one evening that our hero was in direct line of descent from the ancient Earls of Templeton in Devonshire. His sources of information had been unquestioned, and in easy faith it had been repeated, until the dogma had been established, entirely without Templeton's knowledge, as a fixed fact. And the Templetons of Devonshire were known to be the blood relations of the Tudors themselves.

If there is one thing that a Spaniard is distinguished for above all the other men on the earth, it is for his love of pure, patrician blood.

"Better feed on the rats that infest the crumbling old ruins of their ancestral domain, and finally starve in its sky-loft, than to receive alms from the hands of the monied buyers of thrones, like those who had so often disgraced Poland," was one of their maxims.

Alvarez was a political exile, strong in these personal prejudices, as in his reverence for the blood of Castile, and he had sooner far, like another Virginius, have slain his daughter with his own hands, than have seen her disgrace her name by a marriage into any new house.

Templeton had seemed in truth to him, so complete a man of bronze, that he would almost as soon have thought of a married man becoming a suitor for the hand of his daughter as this young barrister, not yet thirty years of age; yet Templeton's influence over the fair sex was pre-eminent when he chose to exert it. He no longer stammered, or blushed, or turned pale when introduced to the reigning belles of his time; and they, piqued at his sang froid, had sometimes fatally determined to try the effect of a Parthian glance upon him.

Some of them, we fear, lived bitterly to repent their rashness. When there was least danger of his becoming a lover, he could play the role to perfection. No man of his age ever felt less of the tender purity of passion. Yet for this very reason no man of his age was ever more dangerous. The wily Robespierre never said a truer thing than in his counsel to his niece—"He who says beat, 'I love you,' is always he who lies most."

As his character gained strength in some respects, it lost in others; and his friends had often to condone some gallant escalade that they could not justify.

We all know that when a man makes love to every woman he meets, who has a single fine point about her—whether in the taper of delicate fingers, the peach-blossom of a cheek, the dewy voluptuousness of a rosy lip or the melting glance of soft eyes—he feels it for none; and hence, we cannot wonder that though Earle Templeton's leisure hours were frequently sighed away in a lady's boudoir, making love to some high, proud lady, because it suited a political purpose to do so, or he knew that some other fellow was dying to be there—the sigh was generally one of disgust, or at best of terrible ennui.

It was at this era of his life that Earle Templeton became acquainted with Nina Alvarez. And, as he afterward sprondly reflected, it was through the father's instrumentality that it was brought about.

Late one afternoon the elder Alvarez dropped into Templeton's office on a matter of business, and after it was finished, and he had struggled for some moments against the charm of the latter's manner, he graciously proposed that they should take a stroll together.

Office hours were now over, and Templeton had no alternative but to comply. Indeed he could think of no pleasanter way for whiling away the next hour or so, and the two sauntered forth together.

"Have you a favorite promenade?" asked the Spaniard, politely, as they gained the street.

"Yes," said Templeton. "The one which your good taste has already selected for the evening."

"Then," answered Alvarez, smiling, "it shall be down by the beach, we can think more deeply and talk more poetically amid the roar of the waves. Ah, señor, the big guns of old ocean are not as terrifying to our ears after all as those of the land."

"That depends upon the circumstances under which we hear them," answered Templeton, laughing. "For example, when the frail plank of a wrecked vessel is all that protects us from the battle of the waves, I think the latter may be equally as dangerous."

"You are right," responded Alvarez. "But at least we must confess that the view from here is sublime. Do you see that little speck upon the blue field of waters off yonder? It is my son Sebastian. His sister has insisted upon his taking her out as he used to do on the Mediterranean. They tell me the waves are not always as smooth here, but she is as fearless as any sea-king's mate. We must tarry here until they come up."

The two men walked leisurely upon the beach, indulging in some discursive conversation—sometimes watching the little skiffs of pleasure-parties floating on the waves, and anon themselves silently absorbed in the beauty of the scene. They too had failed to observe the rapid gathering of the clouds, until the sky had become quite overcast.

"It looks threatening," said the father, at length. "Let me signal Sebastian. They are as thoughtless as any children now," and mounting upon the highest sand-bank, he began to wave his handkerchief aloft.

"They see," said Templeton, "and are returning; but the waves will be rougher now the wind has risen."

Rougher indeed; for the wind blew a tornado of sand in their eyes, and the great billows began to rise mountain-like on the beach.

"This is your northern climate. Bah! it is fearful!" cried the Spaniard. "My Nina shall venture out no more."

The little bark kept its way right gallantly over the waves, while every moment they seemed lashing themselves into fury to engulf it.

"Haste! haste!" cried the father, as though they could hear him. "The breakers are becoming fearful!"

The men in charge of the skiff seemed now equally anxious to reach the land. They plied their oars furiously; but the adverse wind was almost irresistible, and their progress was slow.

The agitation of Alvarez was painful to behold.

Templeton, too, could but grow alarmed.

The breakers were rolling at their feet crested with white seething surf. Above in the looming skies, dense clouds driven by the fierce wind were hurled one against another; the thunder vibrated through the air, and echoed over land and sea.

The party in the boat saw all and grew white with fear; Nina Alvarez had no craven blood in her veins, she did not shrink or faint, but sat erect and observant beside her brother, who had grasped an oar. The two boatmen plied theirs with desperation. Their strong, brawny arms were conquering, and they had come within a hundred yards of the landing, when a terrific peal of thunder seemed to shake the very earth to its centre.

The two men on shore involuntarily covered their faces for a moment. When they looked up the ringed lightning was circling the boat, eddying round in its ghastly glare—a very whirlpool of flame. Then another gust of wind almost lifted them from their feet. A great moan came from the giant oaks of the dense, monastic woodland to their left, that bowed and shook like the willow reeds along the arm of the inlet, and when the momentary lull came they saw the little boat lying bottom upward on the waves.

Where were its occupants?

Sinking down, down in the whirling abyss.

Alvarez tore his hair and shrieked out louder than the tempest. "Be still," said Templeton, like the voice of destiny, for he had instantly recovered his iron composure. "They shall be saved."

By most men this would have been far more readily promised than accomplished. A hissing whirlpool still lay between them and the shore, and if carried to the rocks above or below they would be dashed to pieces upon their sharp angles.

The two sailors were now seen making brave headway along the foam-crested waves. Sebastian Alvarez had also risen to the surface, and with one arm about the form of his sister, was struggling with difficulty toward them.

Juan Alvarez made a rush for the waves.

"Keep back and trust to me," said Templeton, in clear, composed tones, a second time drawing him back. "You are old and feeble, and will but help to sink them. If any life here is lost it shall be mine."

The two boatmen were nearing the shore side by side.

Templeton drew a pistol.

"Shame on you!" he cried. "You are seamen, and yet leave a woman to perish within call of land! Back to the help of Alvarez and his sister, and I will insure you a landing, but if you play the coward, you shall die by my hand!"

His countenance was now stern as Neptune's in its anger.

One of the men elevated his companion a little from the water, and showed a dark gash across his face, streaming with blood that the water could not wash away rapidly enough.

"See!" he cried. "He is my youngest brother. My mother gave him to me when she died, and I swore to protect his life at every hazard to my own. His strength is all gone. Let me get him ashore, and I will go back."

The man was panting for breath. His companion was already insensible. Templeton plunged into the water, and drew them ashore. "God bless you," exclaimed the fisherman, who had preserved his own strength until now. "From this day I am your slave," and he fell fainting at Templeton's feet.

Not a moment was to be lost. Sebastian Alvarez in striving to keep his sister safely above water had naturally been left far behind. He was a good swimmer, but the waves were merciless. They pelted him in their remorseless fury until his strength was gone. The receding billows were drifting him at their mercy.

"Redeem your promise or I shall die," groaned the father.

"I will," said Templeton, cheerfully. "Now is my time," and plunging into the water he struck out for those perilled lives. Cutting a passage through the trackless, massive waves, with the bitter brine filling ears and mouth and blinding his vision, he yet kept steadily on. He called to Sebastian Alvarez. The latter answered with a gurgling sound. A few more strokes from his powerful arms, and Templeton had reached his side.

"Give me the lady. Rouse yourself, and make another struggle for life. There is a momentary lull. It may last until we gain the shore."

He threw his left arm about the woman. Her long hair floated over him. He could feel her breath upon his cheek. She was still unconscious, and hence the more easily borne. The brother relieved from her weight bore on at his side, and together they breasted the waves. It was still a desperate struggle—on, on, the great waves sweeping over them now and then, and burying them far out of sight; but they rose again. In the inscrutable providence of God it was decreed that this man should save a life, and then destroy it.

Such are the seeming contradictions of our destiny.

Within a few yards of land, young Alvarez was sinking from exhaustion, when releasing the girl for one moment, Templeton gave the brother a great impetus that sent him shooting across the waves, and over upon the beach, where the father with a wild cry seized him, and drew his half-insensible body beyond the reach of further danger from the billows.

Templeton then turned once more to the girl. She had risen again above the waters, and for the first time he beheld her face upturned to his. Even now the splendor of her beauty dazzled him.

"Like Aphrodite, from the sea-foam," he muttered.

Her dark eyes looked into his with perfect consciousness.

"If you could put your arms about my neck," he half-whispered. She understood him and obeyed at once.

He felt a shiver run through his entire frame. Was he chilled by the water?

He had not time to think, for the next wave sent them out upon the sand; and in his grand strength he rose up, still lifting her in his arms, and bore her to her father's side.

CHAPTER XXII.

This was the beginning. The sequence followed naturally enough.

"You have saved my children's lives," said Alvarez, "and henceforth I shall love you as a son. Alone in the world, Mr. Templeton, you are like the Frenchman. You live in your chambers, and know no such word as 'home.' Come to my house, and find it there. My son has always loved you. My daughter will know no difference between you and her brother; for have you not perilled your own existence for hers?"

There was no resisting the pleadings of the old man now. Indeed Templeton could have had no motive for doing so longer. He found the Spaniard's home one of luxurious ease and elegance, and the daughter cultivated and charming to the last extent.

Florence Eglinston had never been as dazzlingly, voluptuously beautiful as Nina Alvarez; but Nina was not Florence—the Florence that had been; the woman he had worshipped when love instead of ambition was the grand passion of his soul. And to be the beloved is everything. God help us! when we feel such love in this world we are no longer our own. We lose our hearts—we go mad after a smile. We glory in martyrdom. We fold our arms while we are marked, fired at, and brought down like dumb, driven cattle; even while we know that the words, old as the everlasting hills, yet always in our souls, that tell us we are loved, have cursed more lives than they have ever blessed.

Glorious types of beauty, wit and culture may be about us, while the object of our affection may have, to other eyes, not one ennobling trait; and still we adore!

Oh, divine mystery of love! Surely it is born of God!

And so the charms of Nina Alvarez had as yet failed to touch the heart of Earle Templeton. That had been stunned or paralyzed by the blow he had received when one day Florence Eglinston had told him he must forget her, as she would forget him, for Carroll Tressylian was to be her husband.

And Carroll Tressylian, profoundly ignorant of that little episode in the lives of his protégé and his lady-love, had taken her to his arms as the wife of his bosom, believing that her virginal heart had never thrilled with a single emotion of tenderness until he had stirred its depths by his own passionate appeals. Can we wonder that the younger man, awakened so rudely, should have lost faith in woman?

We may live to see that Earle Templeton's heart, though heavily slumbering, was not dead. But alas for Nina Alvarez, she came into his life too soon. And again, alas for her, she could never dream from the low, soft tones of his voice, how dense were the ice glaciers that had numbed while they gathered about the once glowing chambers of his heart.

He was now almost a daily visitor at her father's house. Sebastian Alvarez was away on a tour. The old man had his books, his foreign correspondence, and his political intrigues still to interest him. The duty of entertaining their visitor devolved mostly upon the daughter.

We have said that she was young, ardent, and heart-free. Could she have fallen by chance into the society of a person of the opposite sex more likely to prove fatal to her happiness than that of Earle Templeton?

We have endeavored to give some idea of his complete personal beauty, of his matchless charms of manner and conversation—a manner all the more pleasing to her because of its perfect ease; never the least confusion or *gaucherie*. However much her cheeks might crimson, his own would preserve their alabaster hue. His eye never lost its steady, penetrating brightness. The man who can govern himself and appear composed even in great danger, is ever pleasing to timid woman. She does not like an overdone repetition of herself. Of the two gross evils, coarseness is preferable to effeminacy in the wearer of pantaloons.

This, as we have previously said, is the time of triumph in a man's life; when he has sufficiently conquered the tumultuous passions of youth to be master of every occasion, ready to moralize, a la Stanhope, at every display of feeling in others.

Nina Alvarez was by nature musical; by diligent application finely cultivated; and Templeton was an ardent lover of music. He bent over her at the piano. He sat at her feet when her fingers swept the strings of the harp. He stood with her on the verandahs, in the holy hush of the star-light, with the breath of roses "like the sweet South," coming from her cheek to his.

Proud and imperious, she had yet yielded almost resistlessly to the spell he had wrought about her. Her admiration had quickly turned to love, and love had deepened into blind adoration. Yet her reserve of manner was so great that, coolly speculative as he had been, he had never even dared raise her fingers to his lips.

Absolutely without self-conceit, he was too well versed in human nature to be blinded here.

"This child is learning to love me," he said, with a sigh, as he returned one evening to his solitary rooms. "She may imagine herself unhappy hereafter; so for the sake of all concerned, I must break with her as soon as possible."

But Earle Templeton was a young man still, we must remember. If he could not love, he had grown philosophical enough to admire; and with his refined perceptions of the beautiful, he was forced to confess this girl a perfect type of womanhood.

When we feel secure ourselves, how easy is it for us to depreciate the danger of others. His encounters with the world, and especially his dealings with women, had not made Earle Templeton a less selfish man.

Nina Alvarez had beguiled him of many weary hours. She elevated his ideas when he turned to her from the less scrupulous belles of fashion.

"She amuses me," he said, the next evening, when he sat at his window, biting the end of his manilla. "And after all, what right have I to think her purer and better than the rest of her sex? Her cheek

has perhaps more delicate, velvety softness; but, like the peach, her heart too is, I dare say, of stone. She may be laughing in her sleeve at the self-conceit which prompts me to suppose her in love."

It was thus that he silenced his conscience, and once more turned into the path of his relentless destiny.

It was at this time that Lilian Thornton learned, through Hartman, of his visits to the beautiful heiress: and in her mad thirst for revenge, had followed him to the theatre, herself to be the judge of the extent of his passion.

"We can afford to wait," she said warily to her unscrupulous accomplice; when, as agreed, he hastened to meet her the next evening. "The later the better; for she is so beautiful that were he really invested with the armor of Achilles—as he has some purpose in feigning to be—she would find the vulnerable point about him, and bring him to her feet."

She had less time to wait than she herself would have dared to hope. Never, perhaps, did Fate play more successfully into the hands of any schemer.

When Templeton next called on Nina Alvarez, he found her pale and dejected. Her musical laugh no longer rippled like silvery waves about him. She broke down in the midst of her first song, and turned away from the harp, her eyes suffused with tears.

"Pray tell me if I can assist you?" he said softly; for he was but a man, and when did the tears of beauty ever fail to move the masculine breast? "You don't know how it distresses me to see you thus agitated. Tell me what it is that has disturbed you?"

"I fear you might know—might find out who has dared to traduce you; your pride would lead you into trouble; and I had rather die than be the means of bringing that upon you," she faltered.

"Traduce me!" he exclaimed, with a flush of angry surprise. "I may have my enemies in the world at large. I do not care. But tell me which of them has dared to creep like a serpent, into your Eden, my child, and I will show you how I can place my heel upon its head and crush it without a struggle."

All anger was gone in a moment, and a look of solemn tenderness came into his face. Was he bringing sorrow into her young life—a life that ought to be so full of brilliant promise, and were her tears for him?

"What is it, Nina?" he asked again.

It was not an entreaty. It was a command. And this girl, with all her pride of wealth and of birth, had become the slave of her love. Her gazelle eyes trembled with dewy light as she looked up at him from beneath the long silken lashes. He had never called her "Nina" before.

"My own heart would have prompted me to burn it in disdain," she faltered, as she drew a letter from the folds of her dress. "But the threat terrified me. It—it would be worse than death."

He held out his hand for the crumpled sheet of paper. It was still damp with her tears.

"You wish me to read?" he asked.

"Yes."

A clear, strong hand, and within the folds of the paper he read these lines:

"You are a stranger in our country—but all who have seen you, have reason to believe you a lady tenderly raised, and as pure as you are beautiful. Your father, with the thoughtlessness that can be the result of nothing but a second childhood, in wishing to protect his lamb from the rough winds of the north, has placed her in a den of wolves. Dismiss Earle Templeton with the disgrace he so richly merits, from your presence; unless, like Cleopatra, you would voluntarily take to your bosom the asp that will sting away your life. He has the skin of a panther; but the panther's nature too. He has perfectly learned the art which Hamlet found so difficult, 'to smile, and be a villain.' His power over women is well known. It is always tested in their ruin. Avoid him ere it is too late. He is winning your heart, but he is winning it to destroy. Proofs of his unscrupulousness and general dishonor, will be placed before your brother, who with the Alvarez blood in his veins, will deal with the miscreant as he deserves, unless you have strength enough to protect yourself, and spurn him from you at once and forever.

"Should other warnings be deemed necessary, they will be addressed to Don Juan and Sebastian Alvarez. You know what your brother has been under the least wrong done to his father or himself. Imagine what he would be when that wrong had been directed remorselessly toward you. His own death, or that of the unworthy object of your affections, would be the inevitable result. Think of this, and retain Earle Templeton at your side, if you dare.

"One, whose just enmity he has provoked; but who would be to you

"A FRIEND."

Templeton scanned the penmanship critically.

"It is a woman's writing," he said, with a cold sneer; "but whose, I am utterly at a loss to divine. As I have failed to win their love, so I had calculated to escape their malice: but we sterner mortals reason without the slightest basis of logic, where your sex is concerned, I see. You have shown this to your father?"

"No! oh, no, no!"

"Then there can be but one reason for your silence. You fear it is true?"

"No;" repeated the girl, passionately. "I would stake my existence on its utter falsehood. But they, or she, says truly of my father and brother. They are so strange—so fiercely resentful when their suspicions are once aroused. They might anger you, and then—"

"Then what, Nina?"

"You would not care to see me any more."

These words were whispered with a painful blush. He looked down at her, and his own face was convulsed with passion that seemed strongly allied to pain.

"And would that distress you, Nina?"

This time there was no answer. Her face was covered with her hands, and the tears trickled through her fingers.

Good God! could it be, that, when all too late, this woman loved him, as he had once loved. That her weaker nature must brave the tempest in which he had well nigh perished. There could be no cause for dissembling; no avarice here. He had no fortune to lay at her feet.

He was beloved!

Though we have nothing to give in return; though our own hearts have been blackened and desolated by time and woe; even when all its idols are fallen in the dust, and there is no temple in all its wastes, where we may worship; still there is something akin to heaven in the thought that we are loved.

There was fierce upheaving of the ice now, and Templeton's voice was husky with emotion, as he rose to his feet.

"Miss Alvarez, give me that letter. I must show it to your father at once."

"In mercy to me do not. If there is foundation for one breath in it he will find it out, and will never forgive you. Oh! let us only be friends, as we have been!"

"Do you not feel that friendship between us is henceforth impossible?" He held the open note in his hand; and went out at the door—erect, confident as any lord in his own castle. He rapped at the door of her father's private reading-room.

"Come in," said the Spaniard.

Templeton walked up resolutely to the old man's desk.

"Señor Alvarez," he said, "it has, I think, been truthfully averred by the cynic, that for every friend a man has he must expect three enemies. Here is an offset to the high value I have put upon your regard."

And he placed before him the letter we have given. Alvarez resumed his glasses, which he had taken off to shake hands with his friend, and read the anonymous epistle through.

"This seems to have been addressed to my daughter?" he said, coolly.

"It was," answered Templeton. "It had just been received as I entered her presence; and in the natural confusion consequent upon its perusal, she placed it in my hands."

"That was wrong," said Alvarez, with a frown; "she should have thrown it into the fire ere the first six lines were read, or she read it through; and fancying herself in need of advice, she should have shown it to me. Now, since you have given it importance, for its author—who wrote it?"

"I can form no conjecture," answered Templeton.

"Remember," continued Alvarez, with a worldly smile, "we are talking as man to man now. My dear child is not here. This is a woman's handwriting. Think of all those to whom you have made love, under the rose. We expect these things of a man of your youth, good looks and position, as we would expect him to have a cigar-case, a dressing-gown, or a pair of slippers. Has there not been one, harder to win than the rest, to whom you have made promises that you had no idea of keeping; and whose jealousy—they will be jealous, you know, as if they had a right—you have provoked by your visits here?"

"Not one, I swear."

"All men of the bon ton must have more or less scandal. Your name has been coupled with that of Colonel Worthington's confessedly gay sister."

"Her position in society is still good," answered Templeton, with a blush; "she would not dare—"

"There, man, never blush about it," said Alvarez—who having been exiled for years from the influences of home and friends, had imbibed rather Parisian ideas of morality. "There is, then, no serious entanglement; nothing in which I could help you?"

"On my honor there is not," answered Templeton, seriously.

"Then," said the Spaniard, "we will burn this effusion." And he threw the paper into the fire.

"Thank you," said Templeton, pressing his hand. "And now, Señor Alvarez, I must bid you a final adieu."

"How so?" cried the old man. "You are not going away? You are not sent abroad?"

"No;" answered Earle, slowly. "It is a self-imposed exile. However painful—I am afraid, sir, in justice to us all, it is a necessary one."

The image of Nina Alvarez arose before him at that moment, with all her charms enhanced, if possible, by the remembrance of her tender passion for himself, and his bosom heaved with a tumult of emotion.

"Why necessary, if there were no truth in that letter?" asked Alvarez, eyeing him attentively.

"The letter and its writer perish together!" cried Templeton, smiting his breast. He could never have framed his tongue to insinuate, "Your daughter may learn to love me." The man's chivalrous nature forbade that the thought should ever pass his lips to any mortal living. And in the excitement of the moment he believed he was uttering the truth, when he added, "I love your daughter, and I have no position to offer her; I have no fortune."

"You have no fortune," repeated the Spaniard, warmly, "but my daughter has. Take that, and with your genius and blood the road to position is all open before you. With your tongue to back me, in a year from now I will need no other advocate at this or foreign courts. In my daughter alone you are winning a prize for which some of the magnates of this and other lands have sued to me in vain. You have not spoken to her?"

"Could you think me so base!" said Templeton, still hoarse with emotion.

"I was sure that you would not without my permission. You have that. Now go to her, and see what she says."

When the reserve of strong natures at last gives way, the tumult of the soul is fearful. Templeton, quivering in every nerve, sought Nina Alvarez in the parlors, and in her private boudoir. He called her name softly, but there was no answer.

He plunged through the window into the verandah, and out across the many, rose-embowered garden walks. He caught a glimpse of her dress among the shrubbery, and hurried after her. She had seen him, and true to the impulses of her really refined nature, had turned into a summer-house, thinking to escape him. He followed her, and fell at her feet.

"Beautiful angel, smile on me. I come to you with your father's approbation. Deign to listen to me. I have told you in seeming jest before now that you were my ideal of all that was lovely in woman. I swear it to you now, because I have the right to do so. I love you."

"I cannot, will not listen to you," she sobbed, as she endeavored to elude him once more. "I—I command your silence. I—"

"But one other word, and I obey you," he said, rising to his feet. "Is it because you cannot love me?"

"Yes."

The one word had denied, but her soft eyes, filled with tears, spoke volumes that she would in vain have sealed from him.

He caught her in his arms, and, despite her struggles, crushed her against his breast. Modesty dyed her lips and cheeks with a crimson hue, but he kissed them pale again, and held her there until she grew quiet and composed. He forced her to listen, whether she would or not. He called her by every endearing name in the vocabulary of love. Was this the man who had faltered and blushed at the lightest touch of Florence Eglinston's fair fingers but a year before? A sharp doubt even now smote him like a sword. What if this delirious joy were but the transient emotion of the hour? In atonement, he drew her to him once more.

"You have given me one yes this evening that meant no. Now I must have one with its strongest affirmative significance. You do love me, my queen! my empress! my soul's joy!"

His eyes looked into hers from their grand, imperious, searching depths. Would he ever have spoken to that old love thus? We doubt if he would, for the man's strong nature had been aroused only by the suffering he had endured. And she, yielding to that august strength in spite of herself, whispered—

"Yes!"

"What was the other yes, then, for? Did you wish me to believe it?" he asked, with a proud smile, as he looked down upon her.

"I thought then that I would sacrifice my life's happiness for you to believe it," she answered, while a crimson blush again dyed her cheeks. "I—I was so afraid that you had thought me bold—that I had rather drawn this confession from you."

He did not answer; but drawing her arm through his, led her into her father's presence, and together they asked his blessing upon the new relations into which they had entered.

At a late hour he returned to his solitary chambers once more, but not to sleep. When natures like his are stirred to their inmost depths, it is long ere composure returns to mind or body. Day was breaking when he sat at his desk still writing.

"Do I love her? Even now I dare not ask myself that question. I had thought my very heart-strings broken when I snapped asunder those other fetters, stronger than the seven green withes of Delilah, but at least there have been vibrations to-day that no severed chord could feel. At any rate the die is cast, and every effort of my life shall be to make her happy. Was I mercenary? As Heaven is my judge, I think not. And yet to what heights will not her fortune help me to mount? No man is ever properly to be trusted in the statesmanship of a nation, until he has assumed the responsibility of a 'paterfamilias' among his people. We feel that a man would add bulwarks to the government under which his children are to live in common with our own. He is then greater as well as happier, married. The desire to be proud of our possessions is an instinct natural to the human heart. She has the 'vieux sang' of the patrician—great wealth and matchless beauty. What more could I ask?

"Yes, I shall unquestionably be proud of my wife."

He was a lover no longer. He had reasoned himself into philosophy; and extinguishing his light, he sought his couch.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"There is then no doubt but that he has given his heart to your brother's widow, though he has so recently urged you to accept his hand," said Lewis Hartman, with a cold sneer, as he walked on at Lilian Thornton's side. The girl had covered her face with her veil. "They might have waited until poor Ralph was cold in his grave, I think. But, Lilian, brave as you have shown yourself in other respects, I am sure you will not let them see how you suffer in this. I had thought from your sudden illness last night, that you knew the worst, or I should have been more guarded; yet the revelation might have come to you in a manner that you would less have relished. I am confident that you will be prepared to give up this pretty curled darling without a visible struggle, or I could no longer bend to your will as the heroine I have heretofore considered you."

"Give him up!" she repeated, with a bitter laugh, her hand again clutching nervously at her heart. "He has already given himself away, you say, without so much as asking my blessing. I was blind not to see it before. A thousand things rise up in my remembrance now. The frequent constraint in their manner when I was present, their solitary interviews, the rose on her cheek and the sparkle in her eye. Ah, I see it all now! But it was so impossible to imagine, had he died in her arms, that she could forget him so soon. And then to think of his actual death! Oh! my God, can I ever look on their faces again?"

"Yes," said Hartman, composedly. "You have shown that you possess great self-control; exert it still. Go among them as of old. Torture them with the idea that you have no suspicion of their treachery yet. Or, if their home becomes unbearable—Lilian, I must speak. You know how I have loved—"

"Be still!" she cried, fiercely, stamping her little foot upon the pavement. "I will not hear you; or Lewis, forgive me—at least not now. I had sworn to put aside all thoughts of love, and I am rightly punished. I had devoted myself body and soul if need be to the avenging of my brother's death. Help me to that, and if my wretched life can repay you, the remainder of it shall be yours. I should not expect you to serve me for nothing. No one ever does that sort of thing in this age. You are about to interrupt me. Do not, I again command you. Rather tell me again of him. You are sure that she received my letter?"

"Yes."

"And that she did as you fancied she would, and showed it to him?"

"Yes."

"And in the teeth of it, he proposed to her and has been accepted?"

"Yes."

"It was like his cool impudence that nothing can abash; only she too must suffer now, and as is generally the case in such affairs, the weaker party must suffer most. And you are quite sure the old dotard has sanctioned the union of this monster with his beautiful daughter?"

"From my position near the garden-wall, I heard him tell her he had her father's full consent. It seems he had tried the bold stroke of showing your letter to the old man, who was led to believe that it was but the jealous freak of some bold queen about the town, who had been mad enough to fall in love with this Templeton's soft skin and dark eyes."

The girl's face was seen to flush through her heavy veil.

"I have sworn that he shall never succeed, and together we must prevent it," she said, sternly. "We must act quickly, and yet we can bring up nothing against him."

"At least we can prove that he does not love her," said Hartman. "And so handsome a girl will not take to that kindly. You know that, like a second Guy Fawkes, I have rented rooms in the building in which he lodges, and that my chamber adjoins the little office where his desk and fauteuil stand, and all his private papers are kept. Last night through the key-hole I kept watch over him, and saw that in a restless mood he wrote until a late hour. While he was at breakfast this morning I slipped in, took the impress of his desk key, and this copy of the closing remarks of his diary for you to see."

The girl seized the paper and eagerly devoured its contents.

"For a girl with Spanish blood in her veins that will do of itself," she exclaimed, exultingly. "But when the time comes, you must not have a copy. It must be the original."

"Yes, the very words in his own handwriting," replied this wily schemer. "I can easily secure them at the last moment; but it must be when I am to return no more. He might note the missing page. She must be induced also to believe that he loves another. This Violet Worthington can be easily led into some seeming indiscretion that will damn him. The whole regiment is laughing at her mad efforts to entrap him."

"But how can we keep her ignorant, and yet secure her co-operation?"

"Leave that to me," answered Hartman, with a deep smile. "I ask no easier task."

"You have secured the address of Sebastian Alvarez?"

"Yes. He is at Berlin."

"You had best write to him to-night. He might be some weeks getting your letter."

"That is true. It shall be done. I can in the meantime hear of any arrangement from the attendant of Miss Alvarez, who is in my pay."

"And you are constantly spending your money to serve me?" said Lilian with a little shiver.

"Do not speak of that," said Hartman, turning away his Catiline face. "My money is less than my life, and I would sacrifice that if need be, to serve you."

The street lamps were again lighted, and they hurried on in silence. They were passing near Templeton's office—perhaps he had taken her that way designedly—when, as they turned, an awkward figure stumbled across their path. Lilian paused involuntarily on finding that it was an old woman, for Hartman would have hurried on. The beldame, however, had no such consideration for the young girl. She seized Lilian by the arm, gave her a violent shake, and almost tore the shawl from her shoulders.

"You young jade," mumbled the hag. "Strutting about the streets at night and knocking honest folk, that are old enough to be your grandmother, down! I have half a notion to shake the breath from your body."

Lilian gave a faint scream, and Hartman, with his cane uplifted, was about to bring it across the old woman's shoulders in no gentle manner, when his arm was stayed by the hand of a policeman.

"Take care, sir, take care," exclaimed the official. "You are about to let the law have a hold on you. With your permission, I'll take charge of this troublesome old lady, and put her in the lock-up until she is in a condition to be less obstreperous."

"I will not go," shrieked the old woman. "I tell you I am nigh upon starving, and none of you will show me Carroll Tresaylian's office. I can hide away there and sleep on the steps till he comes in the mornin'. I ha' done it often. I promised him never to go to Coldham again, and I must be as good as my word, but I tell ye I must see him the morrow."

Both Lilian and her escort had begun to listen with eager interest.

"Poor creature," said Hartman, changing his tone, "she is either drunk or demented."

"I am neither drunk nor mad," she shrieked. "When a body is starving, can ye not believe? I may ask my own son for money without the like of you interfering, can't I?"

"But, my good woman," said Hartman, slowly, "do you not know that Carroll Tresaylian is dead?"

"Dead!" she exclaimed, wildly. "Oh, not dead! I couldn't believe it; and my last chance for the t'other money gone! It was through the child Templeton I could draw his purse-strings. Oh, he despised me, I know, but he would not have me tell the boy, and now death has revealed all. The old one gone, and the young one I dare not face."

"Mr. Policeman," said Hartman, struggling in vain now to appear composed, while he slipped a fee into his hand, "I have just recognized this unfortunate creature; and sad as it is to confess, she has some claims upon me. My rooms are just here. Let me take her up and look her in there, and to-morrow, if need be, I will go bail for her future good behavior." This had been whispered in an undertone that had escaped the old woman's ears. The policeman stepped back, with a bow.

"You have heard her," said Hartman quickly to Lilian. "She may be worth her weight in gold to us. I must take her up to my rooms. You cannot go on alone. Will you wait on us?"

"Yes," she answered, eagerly.

"Come," he continued, addressing the old woman. "You see I have sent the policeman away. One cannot help feeling sorry for you. This is Mr. Tresaylian's office, and I have a room adjoining it, where you may pass the night undisturbed."

"Thanks! thanks!" she muttered. "You have a feelin' 'art, my son. Jest show me the way, though. I am all overcome of sleep. What's this jade for? Can't she help me along?"

"Be still," said Hartman, sternly. "That is a lady who may be of service to you. What is your name?"

"Was it West afore? Aye, but it's bitter cold again to-night. It is North, sir, Mrs. North."

"Then, Mrs. North," said Hartman, lifting her in his arms, "I will take you up bodily to a couch of straw. It will be soft for you until the morning. Miss Lilian, this is the key. I can light a match at this old creature's breath when we reach the head of the stairway, that you may open the door. The street lamp will guide you that far."

She passed quickly up the steps before him, never thinking of herself, the old woman mumbling unintelligibly all the while. The match had to be struck against the wall, and she opened the door.

"Now, Mrs. North," continued Hartman, half-comically, as he gave her a good shake and sat her in a chair, "you knew Carroll Tresaylian. We want to know if you can tell us anything of his partner, Earle Templeton, also; and if you can, why, make yourself at home. I am your banker."

"Earle Templeton!" she exclaimed with a sleepy nod that was intended for a wink. "God knows I have seen trouble enough about the boy, first and last, to know him. And yet, in his false pride, he would walk over me in the street for all he knows of me."

"Then his pride is his lawful inheritance?" cried Lilian, "and he descends from the proud line of Athol Templeton's house?"

"Ha!" exclaimed the old woman, "do they know that much? Well, they are right; but it was on the— Ha! what was I saying?"

"Tell us what you know," said Hartman, "and we will make you rich."

"A thousand pound down," she muttered, nodding again. "A thousand pound down, and me to count it out one by one. Hold me up and I'll put 'em down, every Templeton of 'em low enough," and she fell in a bundle upon the floor.

"She has no love for him at any rate," said Hartman, "and she can be readily bought. Nothing more is to be had from her to-night, however, and we had best be going."

He saw Lilian out before him, closed the door with his own hands; turned the key; shook it to see that it was secure, and once more descended the steps. As they came under the light of the street-lamps, George Chester, hurrying by, staggered back in amazement as he recognized Lilian Thornton at that hour of the night in the company of Lewis Hartman.

"Oh, my God!" he murmured with a shudder. "She has gone mad. I felt sure that she would. But this villain, if he has wronged her, shall die by my hand." He turned back, reeling through the streets like one intoxicated, and followed them, himself unseen, to his own door.

They did not linger over their good-night. In a moment Lilian had passed through the rear gate to her own room, and Lewis Hartman turning back alone, had not proceeded a dozen paces, when he felt his arm clasped by no gentle hand, and looking up, saw George Chester towering above him, his eyes flaming with terrible indignation.

"You have escaped me before, Lewis Hartman," he hissed, "but now I have you, and shall hold you. I want to know how you dare to encourage a young lady from my house, and that lady evidently not in her right mind, to clandestine interviews with you. If harm has happened to her through you, say your prayers at once, and let them be short."

"Amen," said Hartman, coolly; for this man with all his villainy was no coward. "The man would deserve the worst of deaths who could wrong Miss Thornton in thought, word or deed. But you will forgive me, doctor, if I give you advice from a very high authority and say, 'Physician, heal thyself.' You are far madder than Miss Thornton. You have no reason to think me not a gentleman?"

"I do not know."

"Be cautious, doctor, or I may endeavor to teach you."

"No threats with me, sir," said George Chester, sharply. "They will not answer. I have seen you, I could now swear to it, lurking around my house, and you have avoided me suspiciously. I now find you creeping up to it in no very creditable manner by a postern door. You must explain yourself at once."

"Easily done," he said, with a cold laugh that jarred on George Chester's ears until he had to exert all his self-control to keep from slapping the rascal's white teeth down his throat. "These streets are not private property, and one has a right to walk them at any and all hours he pleases, provided he violates no municipal regulation. Now I may have passed here before, or I may not. I will even confess to stopping for a moment to inspect this very rare acacia tree a few evenings ago, but that is not to the point. I met Miss Thornton on the street at a very late hour this evening, and she asked me to accompany her back home, as she had been unavoidably detained!"

"Detained where?"

"You are imagining me in your own boots, sir, as Miss Thornton's keeper. I do not know."

"You lie!" hissed the doctor, for something had told him intuitively that this man was not speaking the truth.

"You shall not make me mad enough to engage in a street fisticuff," said Hartman, though he too trembled with passion. "Go in, sir, and if Miss Thornton cannot give you an account of herself, why I, as her friend, will be prepared to do that, though I have no more idea of her movements than you seem to have."

"I shall do that, then, sir," said Dr. Chester, "and if I find that you presumed upon your acquaintance under the peculiar circumstances that have of late surrounded that poor girl, you may as soon expect to escape death, as that I will not overtake you. Her conduct has been surrounded with a mystery of late that I cannot comprehend."

"My friend, let me whisper in your ear," said Hartman, as he lifted his hat. "There have been mysteries played in that house in which she has had no part. You think your own secret locked safe in your breast. Will it shock you to find that it is fully known to me?"

Was it the moonlight that made the doctor's face look ghastly as death?

"How?" he said, faintly, "you—you—"

"Nay," said Hartman, "you have no cause to fear me. I only wanted to convince you that I could be trusted. And I will suggest to you at parting that for the future, you will not do the ladies under your charge the gross injustice to suppose that they are necessarily in bad company because they chance to be out after nightfall. Doctor, good evening." And Hartman bowed and walked on, for this time at least, triumphant.

Dr. Chester went in at his door with his hand to his brow. He was indeed pale—as pale as death.

"Oh, George, what is it?" said Mary Thornton, rising up to meet him.

"Nothing," he answered. "Nothing but a little passing pain," and he rested his hand tenderly on hers. "And I still feel so anxious about Lilian. Thank heaven, to-morrow evening I shall be absolved from my pledge of secrecy, and Mary, we can beg her forgiveness, and tell her all."

"Ah!" murmured Lilian, as she turned back from the door, for she had started in quest of Mary—having found her mother asleep on her entrance; "their least thought is of me, and ere to-morrow night I shall have something to tell them first. Oh, my love, good-bye, good-bye!" and she turned back, with a choking sob, into her own room.

The next day, Dr. Chester sent in at an early hour to ask for a private interview, which he had been denied the night before. He was astonished to learn, through Mrs. Thornton, that Lilian had gone out.

At dinner the general anxiety for her return was not disguised. It was nearly night when the postman placed a letter in George Chester's hands. He saw that it was in Lilian's handwriting, and tearing off the envelope, read:

"DEAR GEORGE:—I know your and Mary's secret. May you be happy with each other. If the prayers of a sinner can make you so, petitions shall not be wanting in your behalf. Break to my mother, as gently as you can, that I shall not see her again in a very long while, perhaps. It is useless to seek interviews that could only be painful to me. I am freed from her control, having been married to Lewis Hartman an hour ago. God bless you all. LILIAN."

"Oh, my God!" cried George Chester, sinking upon his knees. "She has been made to believe a cruel lie, and has wrecked all our lives. I will follow her for a lifetime, if need be. She does not love him. I will tear her from his arms, and slay him at her feet."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 16.)

☞ A singular wedding was recently celebrated very quietly at a well-known West End church in London. Less than twelve months ago a lady obtained a decree for dissolution of marriage against her husband in the Divorce Court. The divorced husband, not being satisfied with his defeat, "went a-wooing" a second time, and last week was re-married to the wife who had shown herself so determined to get rid of him.

The Scandal about Roy Mordaunt.

BY CHERRY JAMES.

You wish to know how it all came about? I am sure I never anticipated that my wilfulness would lead to such a result, else I—I—well, I might have made my young life happier. There scarce seemed to be any volition about it, either; the way was there, and we dropped into it, although, after all, when I think the circumstance over, I have to come back to the old conclusion that had it not been for my wilfulness I might have stumbled over these ways of journeying that opened up to my bewildered steps. After you have heard my story you will then be capable of concluding whether self-will is a very wicked trait to have, or whether it may at any possible time or under any possible circumstances prove almost a virtue.

I met Roy Mordaunt first when I was in bib and pinafore. And then, again, after several years of other friends and other scenes, we saw each other at dear old Mertylwild as before. That joyous summer, which I hope I may never be so ungrateful to the sweet gate that brought it to me as to forget, found me a guest at my old childhood home, but I went not alone to it, for Cousin Alice Vining accompanied me. Alice and I were orphans, and left to the world much alike in our desolation and helplessness, except that she inherited a considerable fortune, while my income would barely keep me above dependence on others.

Aunt Elspath was glad to welcome us to Mertylwild, and Roy Mordaunt must have been glad, too, for great, shy, bashful boy though he was then, he soon learned to come over every day from his home on the Mordaunt estate which adjoined Mertylwild, and accompany us in all our romps. I should say rather that he and Alice accompanied me in my romps, for I can well remember, almost with a blush of shame now, that it was I who climbed trees, hunted birds' nests, clamberod over fences, sprang on the backs of the untamed colts, and scampered away helter-skelter, waded streams, explored haunted houses, and did many other things that seemed boydenish and boyish, while Alice, who was timid and delicate—a sort of an invalid in her way—clung to Roy's arm, screaming her alarm at my wild pranks, and shrinkingly refusing to follow my romping footsteps, unless when Roy bent over her and promised to guard her. It was only occasionally when scampering on in advance I would look back and see these two thus clinging to each other, and myself forgotten by them, that a pang of envy would spring up into my heart, and I would send back to them an angry exclamation, that would make Alice seem very much shocked at my rudeness, and bring Roy, apparently relieved, to my side to enjoy a wild romp. For you must know I looked upon Roy as my property absolutely. Had I not known him years before Alice saw him? had we not been inseparable friends then? had I not introduced him to Alice as my friend? and after all this he would not dare to dispute my ownership of him, though, when I cared to permit it, he might look at others.

This was at the age of fourteen. I fear when I saw him next, and counted my years to eighteen, I clung to the same faith about this ownership question. Alice and I had then found a permanent home in the London mansion of a wealthy uncle in the tea business. He looked upon us as his daughters, and made our lives very happy, and it was during these happy days that Roy Mordaunt, now through the death of his father, owner of the grand Mordaunt estate, dropped some way into the stream of our lives again, and quietly, without seeking permission or receiving it, but in a matter-of-course way, mingled his own current of life with ours.

There were changes of course. He was no longer an awkward, bashful lad, but a polished gentleman with much of the ease and grace that come in great degree from contact with refined society, while I—well, I was a young lady, and that title presumes the fact that I had dropped my boydenish ways. There was less change in Alice; she was still, when company was present, the same timid, helpless, appealing little invalid, and when I say invalid I mean by it such sick people as the world has many of—sick when an appearance of being an invalid will gain sympathy and attention and petting. And Alice, too, was well aware that nothing made her look so witching and irresistible, her dark hair so massive and rich in its folds, her long eyelashes so electric, and her large eyes so languishing, as to have them contrasted with a snowy pillow supporting her head, and a richly-embroidered crimson wrapper loosely encircling her petite form. She looked so lovely by this little ruse, so fragile and innocent and helpless, that I could not help forgiving her for the deception, and admiring the pretty picture it made.

And after all, there did come a change in this feeling of ownership that I indulged in toward Roy, but it required a little time to bring it about. I couldn't be quite so patient as in the olden days to his neglect of me. It didn't seem quite like neglect either, for during his visits he seemed pleased to come to my side and to talk with me; but Alice in her invalid ways, needed so much attention, so much petting and sympathy that his pitying nature could so gracefully give, and was so constantly requiring his services just at the times when he sought my side, calling him away from me, that I had little chance to see much of him except when his thoughts were quite occupied by others. I rebelled of course, but I could not display it in commands to him as in my girlhood days, and I resorted to petulancy and fault-finding at anything he might say, at which times Alice would always be sure to remark with a horrified elevation of her eyebrows and a shocked, sorrowful, pitying tone:

"I declare, Tillie Ross, you should be ashamed of yourself, and try at least to command your dreadful temper when company is present. Come to me, Roy; I will promise you better treatment."

I was too proud to defend myself against one so frail, and I would not say to him "Don't go" when he lingered to learn my will, so, at last, he got used to going without lingering when she called, and after a little while his place seemed to be permanently by her side. And I then realized that I had lost the ownership over him which I had presumed to claim by virtue of my wilfulness.

It was about this time that a dreadful story began to circulate about Roy Mordaunt, gaining general credence. He had formed, so the statement went, a shameful mesalliance with some unknown creature, being so imprudent and shameless in it as to keep her without effort at concealment, in the noble mansion of the Mordaunts, disgracing the home of his childhood and of a pure and noble ancestry with this brazen conduct. I indignantly refused to believe it of him. I thought I knew his heart and nature well enough to realize that he could not do this thing, and though

Alice persisted constantly that it must be true, that she knew he was capable of this extent of recklessness, that he was undoubtedly a wild fellow, and that I was very unwise in countenancing the slightest acquaintance with him, I continued to greet him just as usual when he came—and so did Alice! When remonstrated with for such strange conduct after her words to me so bitterly denouncing his shameless nature, she only shrugged her shoulders, saying:

"I am an invalid, you know, and must be judged differently from you. I like his society, it amuses me, while it is dangerous to you."

I would not have treated him as usual had I believed all that was said about him, but, after all, it made little difference how I treated him, for he was now always dark and moody, even defiant to me; and, having lost my self-asserted ownership of him, I felt that even my claim to his friendship was speedily slipping through my grasp, while he clung as if for self-protection to Alice.

But as the days passed, matters grew worse with Roy Mordaunt. The scandal regarding him thickened; it gathered facts in proof of its awful assumptions that could not be explained away, and, added to all this, came assurances that he was going to the bad in other ways, that he had been seen staggering through the streets, and that by his reckless habits he had squandered so much of his splendid patrimony as to force him to part with some of the Mordaunt landed estates. Society was cutting him, his old life-long friends were deserting him, and the atmosphere was thick with deadly atoms of scandal against him.

Somehow my uncle clung to his friendship for Roy through all of this; he had liked the frank, straightforward manners of the young man from the first, and he was too busy to annoy himself about floating gossip of any kind. So he persisted in having him occasionally come to dine with us.

On one of these occasions Roy came early, and as Alice was really sick this day, I had him all to myself for several hours, and oh! they were very bright hours to me. My pettishness and Roy's abruptness were gone, and we did not disagree a single moment on any subject, which was very different from our usual fate; not at least until after we sat down at table. Alice persisted in being brought down and placed in her lounging chair at the table, and she looked very sweet, very piquant and witching in her richly-embroidered wrapper, and with her pretty face nestling in the snowy pillow.

Still Roy talked to me most for some time, despite Alice's pleading looks and pleading calls upon his attention. The conversation, by a remark of my blunt old uncle's, turned about the reports circulating regarding the improper conduct of Roy in keeping the unknown female with him in his home at Mordaunt.

"My dear boy," my uncle said, "the public is very indignant with you for what they consider your shameful recklessness. You must be more cautious, until—until—well, you understand."

This was said in an aside to Roy when Alice and I were speaking together; but my quick ear caught the words, and suddenly I formed, with all my wilfulness, a determination to know direct from his own lips all about this matter.

"Is all this that society says about your conduct true, Roy Mordaunt?" I turned to him and abruptly questioned, with almost a fierce look of judgment in my eyes.

He started, colored, hung his head and stammered at first, but suddenly putting forth a strong effort, and meeting my searching gaze with a clear, candid, unswerving one from his own honest eyes, he answered—

"It is not, Tillie." He had not called me that since four years previous, when we were merely boy and girl together; but now the suddenness of my demand upon him startled him out of all formality. And when I heard that name, I felt more certain that he would deal honestly by my question.

"It is not, Tillie," he repeated a second time, and then earnestly added, giving emphasis to each sentence by a motion of his upraised hand, a way he had when earnestly impressing any thought, "I do not deny that there is a strange lady at Mordaunt Mansion, and that I have frequently been seen with her, walking or riding abroad. I acknowledge that matters look suspicious and dark against me, and that people are not altogether to blame for indulging in suspicions; but on my honor I assure you that both the lady at Mordaunt Mansion and myself are innocent as children of any wrong or thought of wrong."

"But there is a mystery, Roy, and—"

"Yes," he interrupted me by saying, "there is a mystery, but it is not mine alone, and I am powerless to reveal it now. Sooner will I permit my character to be forever blasted and all my friends to desert me, than by defending myself and revealing this secret, bring everlasting misery upon an innocent creature."

"Bravely, nobly uttered," murmured my uncle in an enthusiasm that was quite unusual for him.

I looked searchingly at Roy while he spoke. There was truth in his eyes; there were honesty and earnestness in his face and words, and I trusted him.

I was just about to tell him of all this faith that I had in his statements, the words were on my lips, but Alice, as if divining my purpose, spoke first.

"There, Roy Mordaunt," she exclaimed, with a little laugh, "you need add nothing further, for you have said quite enough to have gained the everlasting contempt and abhorrence of Cousin Tillie. Why it was only this morning that she sternly affirmed she would utterly detest any man, and believe him guilty, who permitted the slightest suspicion against his honor to go unexplained, meaning you of course. So you see, dear Roy, you may certainly class her among the list of your calumniators henceforth."

I turned hastily to deny this assumption of Alice's. But I as suddenly checked myself. How could I with dignity? Had I not indeed said, but in answer to a general remark from Alice and with no reference to Roy, that any man who would permit scandal to bandy his name in a shameful manner unchecked, would, unless there was some good cause for his silence, be worthy of contempt. Alice only gave my remark a different coloring; but to explain what I had meant, would require me to show an anxious desire to gain Roy Mordaunt's good opinion of me; it would give him a chance to read my secret—the hidden glory of my heart, the fact that I loved him. No, no, I was too proud and wilful for that. I could bear his hate better than his pity; and I kept silent, and saw him turn coldly away from me, and curbing his temper against me all the evening, bend low over Alice and show her every attention.

A week passed, during which I saw him go by the house several times, always answering my nods of recognition with a wild, passionate, reckless look upon his face that was growing haggard and pale. Then he came to the house one afternoon, and I had to entertain him. For a time he seemed very ill at ease, but as we chatted on, he seemed more like his old frank, happy self again. Still I saw he was struggling with some impulse, and, at last, taking advantage of a slight lull in the course of our conversation, he abruptly broke forth—

"Miss Rose, I beg pardon for referring again to the painful scandals in circulation about myself, and the view you seem to entertain of me in consequence of them, but I desire to explain that—"

Suddenly at this point Alice dashed between us, exclaiming—

"Oh, Tillie, here is your beautiful ring. Your faithful gallant, Mr. Edward Everingham, left it this moment, but went away, not knowing you were in. Ah, Tillie, you cunning girl, it looks as if you have your wish after all; that is, you know, for an immensely wealthy husband. It's a pity, Roy, that you have squandered half the Mordaunt estate—thus placing you beyond Tillie's mercenary designs."

I was about to flash back an angry denial of Alice's prevarications, uttered with a seemingly careless but sarcastic laugh, when she interrupted me, exclaiming—

"Oh, I have dropped the ring. Where is it?"

It fell into Roy's lap; he picked it up, glanced hastily at the inscription it contained, and handing it to me, turned without a word, but with a fearful look upon me of pain, hate and anger, and hastened into the conservatory. Alice followed him, while I sat still, benumbed by Roy's cold, unaccountable conduct, and looking at my ring. It was a diamond setting, a gift recently received from my dear old Aunt Elspath, as the inscription showed, "E. to T." It reached me one evening when Mr. Everingham was visiting us, and seeing that it was too large for my finger, Mr. Everingham persisted in taking it to a jeweller's for me, and he had now returned it altered to the proper size.

Roy went away without returning to the room he had so abruptly left, and when Alice came back she conspicuously displayed on her engagement-finger, a very unique ring belonging to Roy.

"He persisted in my wearing it," she said, carelessly, "but despite his urging, I would not definitely accept it in the way he wished to give it. I think I shall return it to him."

I was calm until I reached my room, and then—I dug a grave and buried all my hopes. But my love for him could not be crowded into it and covered forever; it would rise above it.

Matters grew worse and worse with Roy. Scandal was busy with his name. Rumor spread such startling reports of his acts of impropriety and rashness, of the way he drank and gambled, and the way he had squandered his fortune, that society shrank from him, shunned him as a moral leper, and he was alone. Even Alice, at last, only grudgingly gave him countenance, when others were looking on, while he gave me no opportunity now to recognize him, carefuly avoiding me.

This reckless course of Roy's must result in something alarming. And it did, when, as report said, he mercilessly beat two scions of nobility, who in one of his debauches had insulted him. He was held in prison because he, who had once been the petted favorite of society, could not muster enough friends now to act as sureties for the amount required of him for bail.

My heart rebelled then against its bonds, my nature asserted its wilfulness against all tenets of propriety, all arguments of maidenly modesty and timidity. I moaned, "This man is the idol of my heart, the treasure of my life. I love him, and I will save him, though he turns from me and despises me ever after."

I went to the jail. To secure his release he required, in addition to his own recognizance for a large sum, two sureties in one thousand pounds each. It was the half of my little fortune, and I signed the bond with a firm hand. When this was done, I was surprised to see that already it bore the name of my kind old uncle, thus making the bond complete.

So Roy was free to go his way. He came forth, haggard and careworn; he saw me, divined at once to whom he owed his liberty, and grasping my hand in a firm, grateful grip so strong that it pained me, he murmured:

"You are an angel, Tillie. God bless you for this charitable act."

The carriage I came in was waiting, and we entered it. The driver asked our destination, and Roy exclaimed "Anywhere for a half hour," and then, turning to me, he added, "I must talk with you. I cannot let you go away from me until we understand each other forever."

I trembled at these words, and to hide my confusion, began playing with my ring until it dropped off.

"Ah, I treat Aunt Elspath's gift carelessly," I said, as he stooped for the ring.

"Aunt Elspath's!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "Tillie, tell me true, is this not an engagement ring from Edward Everingham to you? See the initials, 'E. to T.,' meaning Edward to Tillie."

In a moment all flashed upon me—Alice's false insinuations that day in handing me the ring, his glance at the initials in it, and his strange conduct after. I explained all as clearly as I could to him, and he exclaimed, deeply moved:

"Alas, can Alice have been so false? She assured me you were to marry Everingham, and hated me."

I repeated to him then the explanation Alice gave on that day for wearing his ring.

"She falsified, Tillie," he said, much moved. "She asked the loan of my ring, and, suspecting nothing, I gave it. But at last my eyes are opened. I now realize why, in her pettish ways and excuses, she always called me from your side, or forced herself between us; how she ever misrepresented to me all your thoughts and purposes, and gradually led me, spite of the yearnings of my heart, to believe you the falsest and most fickle of women, giving me intensest misery thereby. It shocks me to think of such falsity and deceit in woman's heart as I now know to exist in Alice's. Why did you not defend yourself, my darling?"

His arms were around me, and his eyes looking pleadingly into mine.

"I was too proud thus to reveal my love for you," I said, impulsively.

And yet I now revealed it, masked by these words. He caught my secret, and pressed me wildly to his heart, and I was contented to rest there, without any further explanation between us. But at length I asked,

"Will you not promise me never again to drink or gamble, or do anything that would occasion me to have a blush of shame for you, darling?"

"I have done none of these things, my pure little Tillie," he answered.

"But your haggard face and bewildered actions, Roy?" I exclaimed.

"Were the result only of my grief over the loss of your respect, and the hopelessness of my yearning to call you my wife."

My arms clung around his neck as I read the truth of this in his worshipful look, but I still questioned.

"That shameful conflict with those young noblemen?"

"They quizzed me," he answered, "about my relations with the mysterious lady who finds a shelter at my home. I gave them my word of honor that their suspicions were unfounded. They still dared to speak lightly of her and others of my lady friends, and I thrashed them into a knowledge of their impertinence and ill-breeding."

Brave, noble man! Did I question him about that woman at his home? No, I could trust him without knowing more. I could trust him in anything. He hesitated, and then said—

"Will you come with me now, my darling, to Mordaunt Mansion for a few hours?"

Go where that low woman was! Subject myself to the criticisms, the scorn, the contempt of society by this step! Give people cause to question my honor and purity! I looked up undecided, met his questioning gaze, and—consented to go with him anywhere, without questioning him why. For I felt that he could be trusted.

An hour's carriage ride brought us there. We alighted, were ushered into the hall, and then into one of the spacious drawing-rooms, where sat a lady and gentleman. The gentleman on seeing me sprang forward. I recognized him, and was clasped to my uncle's breast. What followed had not been premeditated. Roy had brought me here, determined to relieve my heart by revealing to me the secret that was costing him so much suffering from scandal; but my uncle, shaking him by the hands, overjoyed him by assuring him that it need no longer be a secret—all the world might know it.

It was speedily told. Roy's father had in his younger years, when travelling in Italy, contracted a secret marriage, the fruit of which was a daughter. Returning home to conciliate his parents and then bring his wife and child home, he was led to believe from some secret source that his young wife was faithless to him. He cast off the mother and child, refusing ever after to have any intercourse with them or to acknowledge them. The mother died and he again married, his first marriage ever remaining a secret until an account of all the events was found among his papers, with a command to his administrators in no way to acknowledge or assist the child of his first wife.

Roy felt his father was too harsh with his first-born. He did not rest until he found the child of this Italian mother, this child who was his sister, and who was now a most charming, graceful and refined young lady, thanks to her mother's friends, who had reared her and cared for her all these years. He brought her at once to his own home at Mordaunt, concealing her identity from all but my own uncle, who had been his secret adviser through all, until first he could trace up beyond doubt the innocence of this poor girl's mother from the charges of infidelity which his father had believed, and next relieve the administrators of his father's estate from any further control of it. This last was necessary to enable him to carry out his fixed purpose of conveying one-half the estate from his own ownership to his new-found sister. On this very day of my visit all these necessary conditions were completed, and the world might know how they had wronged this noble, brave, honorable man, while he had borne it all unmurmuringly.

Society did know it and bowed itself in deepest shame and contrition before him ere he became my worshipped husband, though that occurred only a few weeks after the developments I have mentioned were made. Scorned before, he was now the idol of society, the world's model of virtue and nobility; but in our happy circle at Mordaunt Mansion, consisting of my noble husband, my beloved sister Idela, who was indeed a prize to our hearts, my kind old uncle, whom we all persisted in having reside with us, and my own joyous self, we cared little what rumor said of us.

Alice, who found herself detected and exposed in her long career of treachery, and having too wild a passion of love for Roy to be content to witness his happiness with another, fled out of our sight and knowledge forever.

Freddy's Christmas Story.

INTERPRETED BY PIERRE ERATO.

At Christmas play, and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year.
—*Thomas Tusser*

Tweet! t'weet! tweet!—weet! weet! peep! peep!—peep!—weet! weet! Ah! merry Christmas to all and a happy New Year! Peep! peep! cheep!—tweet! weet! —weet! There! every one that has a story to tell, ventilates it at Christmas time; then why should not I, Freddy, the pet canary-bird, relate a story I know? I can do so—I will.

Tweet! tweet! tweet!

It is about my dear, beautiful young mistress; it is true, and that is in its favor; and you will know when I am done as much as I know of her; her love, her lover; a slight unpleasantness, and about a pleasant affair generally.

Peep!—wheet! Tweet! weet!

A few months after I entered this new palace-cage, and was presented to Miss Anna Markle by her admirer, Charley Wetherton, she and he had, what you call, I think, a "tiff."

It was a pleasant evening, late in August; my young mistress sat in the room, rocking herself gently in her easy, nice low sewing chair. She was doing some pretty needling and quietly singing to herself.

I was in my cage beside the open window. The moon was brightly shining outside; the gas was brightly illuminating the room, and I had to chirp and sing some more before going to sleep for the night.

There were choice flowers and plants on the sill and on wire shelves; while outside the window a splendid woodbine thickly twined.

Presently Anna arose, opened my door and said, "Come out, pretty Freddy."

I chirped and twittered awhile, then flew out and rested on her shoulder. Thence reached up my bill to her lips—nearest kissing I knew how; and tee-weeted a bit, then sang out joyously.

Charley Wetherton came in. "You will split your little throat, Freddy," said he.

His voice was not as pleasant as usual. I looked up at him, and I suddenly cut short my song and flew to my cage; for the usually handsome, smiling Charley had a cloud on his face, anger in his eye; firmness or obstinacy evident in his tightly pressed together lips. Charley was in a bad humor certainly.

Birds have, if not prophetic souls, prophetic instincts, doubt it who may. I had then, so I hopped on to my upper perch, puffed out my feathers, shut one eye under part of my wing, and kept the other eye wide open, bearing unwinkingly upon the lovers.

I learned that Charley had heard of a matter, greatly to the disadvantage of Anna's reputation. A shade of doubt cast on her good character. A grave charge.

She would neither admit nor deny; so Charley was confirmed in believing the report true.

I knew all about the affair, and I knew Anna was innocent of the charge; innocent indeed of any wrong. She was a pure, noble girl, was Anna Markle, my kind mistress.

"My dear Charles, it is not my secret. It is not mine to tell."

She spoke in a firm, low-thrilling tone, and the diamond tear-drops gathered in her eyes.

"Unless you explain, Miss Markle, I must credit the story as I heard it."

"Do not, pray do not urge me, dear Charles. I would tell you if I could. I dare not, as it is not, under the circumstances, right to explain to you or to any one that which is the secret of one very near and dear to me. I cannot say anything without saying all; and if, my love, you knew all, you would love me better; you would appreciate my motives, and would admire, instead of condemning me. Are you not satisfied now?"

"No, Miss Markle, I am not. I must have a clear explanation, or I must believe all I've heard against you. You were at Frankenstein's Hall, at the bar, to meet a man, and such a man! Clear yourself of that fact, and I'll disbelieve the rest."

"I will not to-night. Oh, I am so unhappy! Oh, how cruel you are, Charles Wetherton! In a short time the matter will be made clear. Do wait!"

"I'm sorry, Anna, and regret this, but I insist on knowing all about it, and now."

"Not to-night, sir."

"Why?"

"I told you I must not, so let it end there."

"Miss Markle, relate the circumstances and why they occurred, while I am here; or else let our engagement cease—for I—cannot, I will not marry a—"

I, Freddy, had been anxiously watching these two. I noted Charley was letting his angry passions rise higher and higher, thus blinding his mental, moral, and even physical sight.

I knew well those two loved each other dearly. I was in a strait, a perplexity, if ever bird was. What was I to do? What could I, a tiny bird, do? Surely, said I to myself, they will quarrel, part; her heart will break; there will be regret and pain, unhappiness for them—no end. Then when Charley uttered those words loudly and so very emphatically, "I will not marry a—" I flottered frantically about the cage a moment or so, then flew out swiftly at Charley's lips, spoiling his sentence and stopping other angry words effectually.

"What is the matter with the bird?" he presently exclaimed.

"What is it, Freddy?" asked Anna.

They both tried to catch me, but I dashed about awhile longer, then became quiet, until I found he was resuming the unwelcome theme again.

"We had better break off our engagement, Miss Markle. Far better, if you will not enlighten me."

"As you please, Mr. Wetherton."

Anna had not looked much toward him, but had kept her eyes nearly closed and downward-looking, and her graceful form drooped forward; but when he said those words she stood up, looked him straight in the face, and spoke in clear tones as I told you, looking calm and dignified, even as an offended queen might appear.

"No more of this. Good-bye," said he.

Then the loving heart of my Anna, the true womanhood of the dear girl, cried out:

"Oh, no! not so, dear Charles! Do, please, have patience a little time and wait. Then all will be well."

"I must wed a per—" cried Charley, in his angry tone again.

Then I flew at him once more; rested on his arm, hopped to his open hand, shut my eyes, and rolled over on my back—evidently to Anna's and Charley's consternation—a dead bird.

I had heard them speaking of, and wondering at the skill of one Signor Blitz, much celebrated as a magician, who taught birds tricks, and among other things, to sham death. I benefited by this information. I tried it on my own account, and thus succeeded in keeping the quarrel from going further; succeeded in being apparently dead long enough to make them talk of me, and so I kept them together until Mr. Arthur Markle entered the apartment and aided me in my efforts—innocently done, though, on his part.

He entered, smiling and happy. "Tweet! tweet! Peep! peep! peep! weet!—weet!" chirped I, as I rolled back on my feet again, shook myself, and flew back to my palace-cage. I entered with such a rush, made such an air stir up, that my door went down its slide just as my tail was safely in, thus shutting me up for the night.

I was tired, I assure you, for those were uncommon efforts for a bird. It was no marvel they wondered at me.

It was well for those lovers Anna had such a smart bird! I succeeded far better than a bird might be led to expect. I made my bed, and blew out my feathers, and went to—sleep—with still—one eye open.

Mr. Arthur Markle was Anna's father; he was a tall, handsome man. As I said, he entered smiling and happy-looking, but the smile turned to a grave look of alarm when he saw Charley and Anna's quarrel-like position.

"Why, what is all this, young people?" asked he, as he sat down in the easy arm-chair.

"Oh! father," said Anna, in reply, as she stepped over, and, standing beside him, rested a white hand on his shoulder, "Mr. Wetherton has heard of my being at that place, and has had a wrong interpretation of it from some one. You know I could not tell him the particulars, because it is our dear one's secret yet awhile. He will not believe me—oh! oh!"

And Anna, losing all her late dignity and self-command, cried to her heart's content.

"You should not be so hasty, Charley, in your decisions. You should hear the evidence on both sides first. You wrong one of the dearest girls in the city by distrusting her, and believing aught against her."

"I admit I was too hasty, but I heard—well, never mind what I heard; but you, sir, explain if you may."

"Well, I should not have done so an hour ago, but it is all right now, and I can. Be happy, dear Anna."

"How can I, father?"

"Easily; because Mark is safe and free."

"Oh! I am so glad! May I tell Charles now, father?"

"No, dear, I will explain in my brief way all about it, and clear you as well as our dear Mark."

"Perhaps that will be better. Do so, dear father. Now listen, Mr. Wetherton."

"Proceed, sir, I'm all attention."

Then Mr. Arthur Markle in quick, clear tones and brief sentences, said—

"I had a Brother William who was very successful, and gained great wealth. He died some years ago, and left by will several thousand dollars to Anna, here, for her use and benefit.

"He was very fond of Anna; she was his pet, always.

"Mark Arundel is Anna's youngest uncle, on her mother's side. He is only a few years Anna's senior. In their more youthful days they were much together; they liked each other, and then Mark was a good boy.

"Since he came to man's estate, Mark has yielded to various temptations, become wild and dissipated, and he lately was charged with a crime, of doing which I am confident he is innocent.

"Anna has had several gentlemen friends before you, Mr. Charley, who were professed lovers of her, and some of whom were suitors for her hand. Among these was Vincent Fitz Roy, as you know, a very handsome and gentlemanly-mannered man; but, as you do not know, an extremely wicked, fast, unprincipled and thoroughly selfish person—"

"Excuse me, sir, for interrupting you," said Charley, "but it was Fitz Roy informed me about Miss Markle."

"Yes, I thought so; it is just like him. He has been the chief tempter; the main instrument in leading Mark down hill; in ruining him in character and name, and at last placing Mark in the sad perplexity, from which our heroine—dear Anna—has rescued him. For his release he is indebted to you, dear daughter.

"Mark was deep in gambling and other debts; was accused of theft, and cheating at play.

"He was out of money, and was in momentary dread of arrest. He was guilty of indebtedness, but not, I believe, of the other charges.

"I was called from home about a week ago to attend a matter of business in a neighboring city. I arrived home to-day. I heard Anna's story, and I sought out Mark Arundel.

"Frankenstein's saloon is but a short way from here. Last Tuesday night Mark was there, drinking, carousing, gambling.

"Fitz Roy was also there.

"From pleasantries and drinking they went to play. Mark lost his last dollar. Soon after he and Fitz Roy exchanged loud angry words—then blows.

"Fitz threatened to have Mark arrested for charges about which he professed to have knowledge and proof, and to these he added he would accuse him of assault and battery upon himself.

"Karl Vedder is a waiter-boy there; he has received kindnesses for himself, mother and sisters several times from our Anna; he knew that Mark was her uncle; saw and heard all that passed, and fearing for Mark's safety, perhaps liberty, he left, unseen, the saloon, and came here to tell me, supposing I was at home. There happened to be no one here but Anna that could help. She hastened to the saloon with Karl, without a thought of self, or what will people say; only 'dear uncle needs me' was in her mind.

"She saw the proprietor of the hall, also her Uncle Mark. She arranged for the latter being safely hidden until my return, when she would empower me to pay all Mark's debts, &c., from her own money, left, as I told you, to her by her Uncle William.

"Then she received a written pledge from Mark, in which he promised a thorough reform of himself in every respect, and undying gratitude to Anna.

"The landlord then went out with Mark and promised to secrete him safely.

"I find that Fitz Roy saw Anna there in conversation with Mark.

"He has been talking to others about her, besides you, Charley.

"So you see, my dear boy, our Anna is a heroine; not to blame, but worthy of praise."

Here Mr. Markle ceased, and looked around smilingly happy. Anna's cheeks were bright with happy blushes, and her beautiful eyes were brighter and more beautiful than ever.

Peep! peep! Tweet! weet!—weet! I, Freddy, was just then the half-asleep, happiest little bird alive. Peep! weet! weet!

Did you ever see any one astonished and ashamed both at once? Well, Charley Wetherton looked just like him at the end of the explanation, I'll wager a bottle of fresh mixed seed.

"Pray, sir," he said, "forgive my hasty conclusions. I was decidedly wrong."

"All right, Charley. Keep it quiet among ourselves."

"Yes, certainly. It should go no further. And Anna, dear Anna, am I forgiven, and to be reinstated in your esteem and love?"

But I, Freddy, am getting too sleepy now, just as I did then. Her reply was lost to me somehow. But it was satisfactory, I'm sure; her face was hidden from me, on his shoulder; and you never saw any pair look more like true lovers than Anna and Charley did—just after her father left the room.

"Do not trust appearances or mere hearsay again, dear Charley."

"I never will, my heroic darling."

So you see, as your Mr. Shakespeare says, "All's well that ends well;" and this affair ended well, for the next September they two, in church, were happily married. I was not at the wedding, but I saw Anna in her beautiful white dress, veil and orange blossoms. She looked lovely, and *so* happy.

I have not—I will not ever regret I was such a remarkably smart bird, and prevented the quarrel from growing serious that sweet summer night!

We three, Anna, Charley and I, Freddy, live together and are very content. Tweet! weet! Cheep! peep! What a nice bit of sponge-cake! Tee weet! weet! Merry Christmas to all! Weet! Weet! Weet!

Cured by Laughter.

The Pittsburgh Gazette relates the following: "A short time since two individuals were lying in one room, very sick, one with the brain fever and the other with an aggravated case of the mumps. They were so low that watchers were needed every night, and it was thought doubtful if the one sick of fever would recover. A gentleman was engaged to watch over night, his duty being to wake the nurse whenever it became necessary to administer medicine. In the course of the night both watcher and nurse fell asleep. The man with the mumps lay watching the clock, and saw that it was time to give the fever patient his potion. He was unable to speak aloud, or to move any portion of his body except his arms, but seizing a pillow, he managed to strike the watcher in the face with it. Thus suddenly awakened, the watcher sprang up from his seat, falling to the floor, and awakened both the nurse and the fever patient. The incident struck the sick men as very ludicrous, and they laughed heartily at it for some fifteen or twenty minutes. When the doctor came in the morning he found his patients vastly improved, and he never knew so sudden a turn for the better, and now both are up and well."

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ A Connecticut girl has gone insane from being kissed in the dark.

☞ The Cardiff giant was lately sold in New Orleans for $8.

☞ A Fort Wayne man wants a divorce, on the ground that his wife has gone into training for a walking match.

☞ A rich old fellow in Georgia bought two circus camels, and is amusing his grandchildren with them.

☞ A Sioux Indian girl has appeared on the operatic stage in San Francisco.

☞ A Georgia man advertises that he will be hung to any man's place for fifteen thousand dollars.

☞ Tight lacing is said to be a good indication of how much squeezing a lady can stand.

☞ A lady lecturer, aged sixteen years, recently appeared in New York.

☞ The great legal phenomenon at Jackson, Mich., is a lawyer who eloquently defended in court, the other day, a man who had stolen from him an overcoat.

☞ A young lady in Illinois recently became so much embarrassed by a proposal from her lover, that in her agitation she swallowed a needle.

☞ A Washington drug clerk is under arrest for causing the death of a little child by carelessly putting too much opium in a prescription.

☞ A hunter was torn to pieces by an enraged female bear, whose cub he had wounded, in Cambria county, Pa., recently.

☞ A young lady at Corinth, Miss., recently found the way to the heart of a young man. She did it with a pistol bullet.

☞ Some students lately labelled a female seminary in Akron, Ohio, "Domestic Sewing Machines."

☞ This is ruff. A Western editor says he saw a maiden in the street "who had what seemed to be a stake-and-rider fence of lace around her sloping neck, so high she was compelled to stand on tiptoe in order to see over it."

☞ Fort Yuma used to be called the hottest place in North America. It was excelled, however, last season by Fort Mohave, higher up the Colorado, where, for many days, the mercury rose in the shade to 122 degrees.

☞ At Montoursville, recently, a man was standing by his horse, eating an apple, when the animal opened his jaws and seized the apple, biting the man's thumb completely off.

☞ Old Codorus, York County, Pa., has two twin sisters who resemble each other so much that their parents cannot tell them apart except by an examination of their arms.

☞ The editor of a Minnesota paper has a buffalo robe which was once the property of the Sioux chief, Son of the Sun, whereupon are pictured all his battles, scalps and other trophies. He is going to use it as a means to frighten delinquent subscribers.

☞ A lady in Norwich, Conn., is slowly starving to death, from an inflammation of the throat produced by a fish bone which lodged there some time ago, and which prevents her taking any nourishment.

☞ Three years ago a man in Maine escaped from a lunatic asylum by dropping down the lightning-rod, and recently his mother is said to have received a letter from him, stating that he had found congenial employment in the military service of Turkey.

☞ The bridge across the Potomac at Harper's Ferry is said to be a regular place for runaway couples from Virginia and Maryland to get married.

☞ A Jersey City watchman recently saw a man going home late at night, and shot him to make sure, as he thought he might possibly be a thief.

"Used Up."—What is the precise meaning of this familiar phrase when employed to signify an unnatural condition of body and mind? It means exhaustion, languor, want of vital energy, mental apathy—a pitiable state of physical and mental helplessness. The best, and in fact the only perfectly reliable panacea for a "used up" system is that most popular and potent of medicinal stimulants, Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. No matter whether the health has been broken down by excessive labor, over-study, an insalubrious atmosphere, anxiety, irregularities in diet, dissipation, or any other cause, this powerful and pleasant vegetable restorative will soon recruit the drooping energies of nature, restoring the integrity of the nerves, and re-establishing that functional regularity which is essential to animal vigor and a hopeful frame of mind. As a cure for debility, in all its varied manifestations, Hostetter's Stomach Bitters is unapproached by any tonic in the *materia medica*.

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THE
SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, DEC. 20, 1873.

TERMS---Always in Advance.

Single copy, $3.00 a year, payable in advance, not including postage, which is twenty cents a year, and payable at the office where the paper is received. Every yearly subscriber will be entitled to a copy of our Premium Chrome, or to either of our large and beautiful Premium Steel Engravings—"The Sisters," "The Song of Home at Sea," or "Washington at Mount Vernon."

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☞ Ten cents must always be remitted to pay the expense of mailing the Chromo or engraving. Or 25 cents, if the Chromo is desired mounted on card-board or on muslin. We strongly advise having the Chromo mounted—it greatly increases its value.

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☞ Subscribers in British North America must remit *twenty cents extra*, as we have to prepay the U. S. postage.

☞ Remittances should be made, if possible, in Post-office Orders, or in Drafts or Checks, *payable to the order of the Saturday Post Publishing Company.*

BE CAREFUL IN OPENING THE WRAPPERS OF THE CHROMO OR ENGRAVINGS. Our subscribers are enjoined to be very careful in opening the wrappers of the Chromo or Engravings when they are received lest they should injure them.

Address

SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

1874.

OUR NEW PREMIUM CHROMO.

After examining a great variety of subjects for our new Chromo, we concluded that we could find none to equal that which we already had in the popular engraving,

"ONE OF LIFE'S HAPPY HOURS."

And as we have had repeated demands for that picture, which, owing to the wearing out of the plate, we were unable to supply, we have made arrangements with the celebrated artists, Sinclair & Co., to get us up this subject, as a Chromo, for our new Premium Chromo for our yearly subscribers for 1874.

This next year, we shall make no distinction between our *yearly subscribers*, whether they subscribe *singly or in Clubs*. EVERY YEARLY SUBSCRIBER—SINGLE OR IN A CLUB—shall be entitled to a copy of the new Chromo, by sending on ten cents extra, to pay the cost of mailing.

Our terms are as follows—being much lower than those of any other first-class literary weekly:

One copy, (with a copy of premium Chromo),	$ 3.00
Four copies, (with four copies of premium Chromo),	8.00
Six copies, (with six copies of premium Chromo, and a copy extra of the Chromo to the sender of the Club),	12.00
Eight copies, (with eight copies of premium Chromo, and a copy both of THE POST and of the Chromo extra to the sender of Club),	16.00

All over eight at the same rate.

T. S. Arthur's Home Magazine may be subscribed for in the above clubs at $2.50.

In place of the Chromo, "One of Life's Happy Hours," we will send, if preferred, either of our large and beautiful Premium Steel Engravings, "The Sisters," "The Song of Home at Sea," or "Washington at Mount Vernon."

☞ Ten cents must always be remitted for each Chromo or Engraving ordered, to pay the extra expense incurred by us for mailing, postage, etc. Or, if it is desired that the Chromo should be mounted, 25 cents must be sent for each Chromo required to be so mounted. We strongly advise having the Chromo mounted. It greatly increases its value.

Additions may be made to clubs at the same rate as the original club.

Those who design getting up clubs should commence at once, before the field is occupied by others. We offer, to say the least, as good a paper as the New York Ledger, Saturday Night, etc., and to Clubs at much lower terms, while we give a beautiful Chromo or steel engraving, in addition, and they give nothing.

Those who send on their clubs first, will have the first Chromos, of which a large edition is to be finished by the 1st of December. We trust to be able to supply all orders at once, but as on account of this offer to furnish them to club subscribers, and the well-know n popularity of the picture, we expect to have an immense demand, we should advise the sending on of the clubs as early as possible.

Address

SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

☞ We call attention to the first article of Mrs. H. Peterson's promised series this week. It is entitled "A Hidden Wrong."

OUR CHROMO.

We think our subscribers will be greatly pleased with our new Chromo. If they do not say when they see it, that it is worth of itself the subscription price of the paper, then we shall be very much mistaken.

And we should advise the sending on of the extra 25 cents required to have the Chromo mounted. Our present intention is to mount on card-board when a number are to go to one place, and on muslin when only one or two are to be sent. Those mounted on muslin, as well as the unmounted ones, can be rolled, and go therefore through the mail more safely. Those mounted on card-board, are in danger of being broken in the mails, unless a thick package can be made by a number going together.

But we repeat our recommendation to send the extra 25 cents, and have them mounted one way or the other. It may delay the reception of the Chromos at first a little, but they will look all the better, and be the more durable when they do come.

Hardship.

As the gladiator trains the body, so must we train the mind to self-sacrifice, to endure all things, to meet and overcome difficulty and danger. We must take the rough and thorny road, as well as the smooth and pleasant; and a portion at least of our daily duty must be hard and disagreeable; for the mind cannot be kept strong and healthy in perpetual sunshine only, and the most dangerous of all states is that of constantly recurring pleasure, ease and prosperity. Most persons will find difficulties and hardships enough without seeking them; let them not repine, but take them as a part of that educational discipline necessary to fit the mind to arrive at its highest good.

TO MY BRIDE.

BY T. JEFFERSON CHAMBERS.

When first I looked into your eyes,
My pulses leaped, my heart throbbed fast;
The impersonation of my dreams
I saw complete in you at last.

Long had I wandered through the world,
Unloved, unloving, and alone—
No friend to cheer me on my way,
No wife or child to call my own.

Till, fair as saint from Paradise,
Or Peri from some coral sea,
You stood before my enraptured eyes,
"The one in the wide world" for me.

My heart, my soul went out to you—!
I wooed you, dear, with tender speech—
I felt, I know, that love's sweet pain
Was burning in the breast of each.

I wooed you, and you came to me,
In radiant loveliness of youth,
Your heart responsive to my own
In depth and tenderness and truth.

Though, as we walk life's devious ways,
Some shadows dark may round us fall,
All will be bright when you are near,
My love, my life, my wife, my all!

A HIDDEN WRONG.

In the last number of the Post was finished a story so entitled—very tragic and pitiful, doubtless—but I am sure it cannot be so tragic as the hidden wrong, so neatly and sweetly glossed over, in the dress of women; the wrong done to physical well-being by certain accepted modes of dress. The mischief of heavy clothing has been working fearfully the past few years. All the girls are tired—"tired all the time," and not with honest work, but with bearing useless burdens. They cannot walk out—it is a penance instead of a pleasure, dragging heavy skirts along; they cannot dance, for the same reason, without quick exhaustion; they cannot skate—that exhilarating and healthful pastime has quite gone out of practice in our city, simply and solely, as I believe, from the length and weight of fashionable skirts. What chance is there for health when the dress that everybody wears is forever running counter to it—an ever-working, secret enemy? And it might so easily be otherwise with a little contrivance.

The usual merino underclothing for winter, high-necked, long-sleeved, and reaching to the ankles, is good so far. Well, make additions of the same sort, as many as the climate requires, as warm and as soft as you please, woollen or silk or down-wadded garments, all after the manner of the brethren—why should they have a monopoly of comfort?—but when it comes to the feminine robes, put on for appearance, let them be as few and as light as possible. Some slight arrangement in the way of hoops is valuable help toward looking like other people. A complete stormy-day costume is composed of a circular of the lightest procurable waterproof cloth, (it comes in dark-blues, greens, and browns, very fine and pleasant to wear,) and for the petticoat, which takes the brunt of exposure to the mire of the street, the dress being pinned up out of the way, a foot deep border of waterproof to match will look well without having the circular of a draggling length. Of course rubbers are worn, and a kind of cloth gaiters reaching to the knee, are also used as an additional protection against cold and wet.

It is thus an easy matter, as I hope my readers will acknowledge, to do away with the grievance of oppressive skirts, inasmuch as appearance need not be sacrificed. Another wrong to health, not more serious or covert, but harder to battle with, is the ideal of a perfect figure accepted in these modern days. Oh, the evil, the boundless, endless evil, of a false idea! If only the Medicean Venus, the fully, nobly-developed woman, "as she walked over the hills of Greece with her large white feet," were the fashionable ideal, as she is the artistic and poetic! No more pinching and binding of the vital organs, no more basques fashioned to deadly tightness for the sake of a fine shape, and no more martyrdom of torturing shoes for the sake of little feet. It is so self-evident that the healthful form is the truly graceful and beautiful, that our wonder grows as we think of the perverted taste that sets itself above nature. When and how did the fancy for a wasp-like waist begin to curse the world? Emancipation from this and kindred thraldoms of dress would do more for women than all other emancipations put together.

For that *bête noir* of the British matron—that affliction of excessive embonpoint, I do profoundly pity our English cousins. What fearful temptations it leads them into!—temptations from which most of us in America are so entirely exempt that we are prone to judge without charity through ignorance of the case. The practice of tight-lacing, discussed with such lively interest by the correspondents of London fashion magazines, and defended with such absurd theories, defiant and reckless of physical laws, that one knows not whether to laugh or weep at the infatuation of so many good, respectable people, do we ever consider—we happy untempted mortals, their deplorable case? A young lady has always prided herself upon her fine figure; what horror to find herself growing stout! Slender and shapely she will continue, or die in the attempt. As a general thing childhood and youth are charming. Tourists rave over "the lovely, lovely English children!" But sometimes, as the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, the girl of fourteen threatens to be overgrown and disproportioned, instead of developing properly. What is her horrified mother to do? Of course she ought not to train her daughter's figure in defiance of sacred hygienic laws. To do so, is more or less disastrous even to the beauty for which health is sacrificed. A red nose, and red hands, and a blotchy complexion are pretty sure results. But what wonder that the average mother sends for a French corset, warranted to insure a fine shape, and therein encases the rebellious fulness that drives her frantic to contemplate, even refusing in desperate cases to let the girl take it off at night, but securing the lacing with a padlock! The average mother knows little of physiology and cares less. She "does not believe" it will hurt her child, and the evil she is trying to avert is unendurable to a refined taste. Let us pity while we blame.

Blame we must, for the consequences to the next generation cannot be averted by any care or any advantageous circumstances that wealth can command. The girl that grows up to womanhood breathing half breaths, and marries in that half-alive state, will have pale, puny, weak-eyed, weak-brained children, instead of the vigorous, intelligent, beautiful sons and daughters who might otherwise be her blessing and her pride.

Go on talking then, physicians, ministers, editors, physiologists and moralists, everywhere—labor on for the good time coming when the Grecian Venus will reign Queen of Beauty, and women cease to suffer the bidden wrong of unhealthful dress.

S. P.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

THE NIGHT SIDE OF LIFE.

Doubtless you'll think me hard driven for something to write about when you come to read this. You won't admire my taste, I know. Well, I don't care whether you do or not. I got over caring whether folks admired me at least five years ago. So you see you can't worry me by withholding your distinguished admiration. Think what you will about me, you can't make me stay awake nights over it.

Last week I went to our city Police Court. I went there of my own free will, mind you. I wasn't "drunk and disorderly." No more had I been cruel to any animals. (I always throw cold water on cats, though, when they come into my yard.) I wanted to see for myself what it looked like in there, and hear what they said. A very kind and gentlemanly newspaper man piloted me and posted me, and now I'm going to POST you, good friends. Newspaper people are always kind and gentlemanly. Even newspaper women are kind and gentlemanly.

The habitues of the Police Court are not quite as handsome as you and I, my friend. We are no beauties, maybe, compared with the rest of the world; but I am sure we are beauties compared with those Police Court bummers. They are the very dregs of a vile and corrupt city life. The Tartar savage, in mid-Asia, is cleaner, happier, and finer than they are. And they are the natural result of our civilization. They are just what society has made them. You who live an ordinary respectable hum-drum life, among respectable people, would hardly believe there were such looking human creatures in existence. But it's well to know what kind of people there are in the world, sometimes.

The Court was trying the case of a very mean, ill-looking fellow, when we first went in. His face was all scratched up and torn, as if an enraged good-sized cat had been after him. He was telling the story of how he had come by this scratching, in a whining, spiteful, one-sided way. His head was all wadded up in a woollen scarf. The prosecuting attorney, who manages the cases and asks the questions, looked at him sharply, and said:

"Take off that scarf."

The mean-looking fellow did so, and displayed a sort of gorilla-shaped head, bandaged up across the top and around the ears.

"What did you do to this man before he struck you?" asked the attorney.

"I never done nothin' to him," whined the rascal. "I never raised my hand. I just raised my hands over my head, and let him pound away."

What an injured angel, to be sure! But the fact was, the fellow was too cowardly to take his own part. That was why he let the man "pound away." Offences in our Police Court are punished by fine and imprisonment in the work-house, where the poor rogues who haven't any money to pay their fines, work out their sentence. The injured masculine angel, who let the other fellow "pound away," was sent to the work-house in spite of being an injured angel. The Court officers didn't believe he was such an almighty angel, somehow.

The Police Court is strictly in favor of the equal rights of the two sexes. It pays its attentions to men and women without distinction of sex. After the whining angel with the bandaged head had been sent to the work-house, I am sorry to be obliged to record that a woman was brought up for trial. Her hair hung wildly about her shoulders, and her dress was torn and dirty. A policeman had fished her out of a gutter, where she was lying in a state of beastly intoxication, with a gang of those everlasting boys around her, poking her with sticks and making remarks much more personal than complimentary. The woman, too, was sentenced to the work-house, poor, wretched creature! She wasn't a bad-looking woman either—had a shapely nose, and pretty, shell-like ears, and her skin was fair and delicate. She had been neatly dressed before she had got into that fearful state of intoxication. This woman is one of the famous characters of our city. She is Irish, and one of the neatest, best housekeepers in the State. She will go and hire herself to some lady as housekeeper, and, to give Satan his due, it may be said that she can always find good places to work, when she wants them. She will work faithfully for three or four weeks—none neater, more industrious, or honest than she. She makes friends and gains the good-will of everybody, wherever she is employed. She works thus faithfully and blamelessly for a month, perhaps, and then the raging demon within her breaks out beyond her control, and she suddenly, without a moment's warning, leaves her home, rushes off and drinks herself insanely drunk. Then she roams the streets bareheaded, howling like a crazy woman, until some policeman captures her and locks her in a station-house. From the station-house she is sent to the work-house to sober off. After serving out a sentence in the work-house, back she comes, hunts up a place to work, only to repeat the same old story. That has been her history for several years past. They say that except just this unfortunate and irresistible propensity to drink, the poor woman has not a fault in the world. What a pity there is no possible way to keep her from drink!

Next after the drunken housekeeper, fit comrades for her on her doleful journey in the work-house wagon, came two bummers with battered noses. How hideous a human being can make his countenance look, abusing it with dirt, drink and devilishness, till there is hardly a trace of the human being left! That's the case with these two hideous old bummers. They are usually the best of friends, hand and glove in loafing and petty thievery, but they quarrelled over their whisky, had a scrimmage, gave each other bloody noses, and hence these tears. One old bummer makes oath before the Police Court that he asked the other old bummer for a "plug o' tobacco," in a friendly manner, though what that has to do with the quarrel and the old bummer's bloody nose, does not appear.

"I asked you fur a plug o' tobacco. Didn't I ask you fur a plug o' tobacco?"

For aught I know, these two old bummers may be discussing to this day the grave and important question whether one didn't give the other a "plug o' tobacco." They were sentenced to the work-house too, and then the Court adjourned. After that, the police captain telegraphed out for the work-house wagon. Do you know, Mr. Post, why people always call the wagon which conveys prisoners to the work-house the "Black Maria?" I don't know, and I can't find out. But while they were waiting for the "Black Maria" to come and convey the prisoners away, they let us go inside the iron gate, and look at the prison cells. A young negro was in the first one, and just outside the locked door of his cell were two black girls, talking earnestly to him in a low tone, and comforting him continually with cakes and candies, which they poked in through the iron bars to him. They stayed beside him until just before the Black Maria came to take him away to the work-house, then they went and sat in the room outside, waiting to see the last of him. They appeared very devoted to him. Probably it was a devotion worthy of a better cause.

At length the wagon arrived, and the motley procession advanced,—the drunken housekeeper, the two old bummers with battered noses, the fellow who "never done nothin'," the dirty, ugly negro, and all the rest, and amid a crowd of boys and loafers as dirty and forlorn as themselves, some of these last being friends of the prisoners, who had assembled to see them off, the door of the Black Maria closed on them, and away they went.

What poor, dirty, contemptible wretches they are to be sure! That is what respectable people mostly think of them. And yet they are more to be feared than despised, after all. Because these are the people from whom the mobs come, the people who fill the jails, the penitentiaries, the pauper and lunatic asylums. I suppose they would have been as good as you or I, with our opportunities. These hard times it is a real comfort to some of the poor souls to get into the work-house. Food is plenty there, and they have warm, comfortable lodging. Outside, they have neither. And there are more than they, who have neither food nor lodging, this dreary winter. Even in our city there are hundreds who sleep on the police station-house floor every night, and know no more than if they were dead where they are to get breakfast in the morning. The station-house captains tell some queer tales. They say that, this winter, sometimes men clad in broad-cloth, apply to them for a night's lodging on the station-house floor. A hotel-keeper from a neighboring State did that, not long since. He was a respectable man, and had been in a flourishing business, but it had gone down, and he found himself in our city one night at midnight, without a dime in the world, and unable to find his friends. So he came and asked to sleep at the station-house, along with the old vags and the city outcasts. I myself saw two well-dressed girls, with clothing both good and fashionable, apply for lodging in a station-house one night lately, because they had nowhere else to go. I don't know what in the world we are coming to. But I'm sure we can't arrive at anything worse than we have reached already.

ZIG.

THE POST AS A PROPHET.

When, a few weeks ago, we kindly advised the publishers of the "Atlantic Monthly" to withdraw their editor, Mr. Howells, from active mental labor, "lest paralysis both to himself and the magazine should ensue," we little thought that in so short a time we should be called upon to chronicle the close of the Boston career of that once celebrated Monthly.

But it is even so. The "Atlantic" has passed into the hands of Messrs. Hurd & Houghton of New York, and relieved our worthy and intelligent fellow-citizens of Boston from the further infliction of its presence.

What price these philanthropic New York publishers have been paid for taking the "Atlantic" under their protection, we are not advised—but probably some large amount, as we perceive the editor of the "Atlantic" is to be taken also. This latter fact would seem to indicate that Hurd & Houghton, like many other famous philanthropists, are more distinguished for their benevolence than for their literary ability.

It is a pity that such a number of our magazines should be edited by second-rate and even third-rate men. The idea, for instance, of a periodical with the pretensions of the "Atlantic," being edited by a man who could write such egotistical and offensive verses as those we quoted last week relative to the "Poet's Friends!" To think of such a small intellect presuming to sit in judgment upon the productions of men of double his ability, and to say what is well written, and what is not well written. When one looks closely at the lion's skin of some "celebrated" magazine, and sees the long ears of a conceited donkey sticking through, no wonder he feels like stripping off the pretentious disguise, and showing the world of credulous readers that what they took for the roar of a lion was simply the bray of a very inferior animal.

In conclusion, as this may be looked upon as the demise of the "Atlantic," so far as its Boston existence is concerned—and as we are always ready to do a good turn to an enemy, as in so doing we are taught that "we heap coals of fire upon his head"—we have prepared for its gravestone the following appropriate

EPITAPH.

In this grave lies the Atlantic,
Spiteful, stupid and pedantic.
While it lived it Howled at many,
Frowzy, insolent old zany;
Now it's dead 'twill howl still more
Than it ever did before.

H. P.

THE MANTEL CLOCK.

BY GLEN CAROL.

"Tick-tick, tick-tick," goes the little clock upon the mantel. It has measured off the hours for you, sad and joyous, for many a year, and you have come to regard the white figure-dotted face with a real affection. It has meted out strictest justice to you and yours. The glad hours have never been prolonged beyond the allotted moment, nor the sorrowful ones shortened by one single omission of its monotonous call. Meeting or parting, it has checked off the golden circle of the hours relentlessly. Whether Life, with song and laughter, dwelt within the house, or Death, with solemn and awful presence hovered near, its voice has been heard ever steadily, without one quaver in its ceaseless tone.

You have wanted to urge the slender hands of steel forward, sometimes. How much faster than the timepiece beat your own restless heart! You were positive that six hundred minutes instead of sixty had been woven into that hour. All too slow the minutes glide when love waits for love!

But there came a day when you would have held Time, himself, at bay—a day in which the shadow that comes *but once* hovered around the throne where Love had reigned, a king—a day in which you would have given life for life—when darkness and silence seemed fittest guests, and the little space that must elapse ere eternity began for one who had almost done with time, was counted out by the pendulum's rapid stroke—and when, discrowned, dismantled, king and throne were nought but clay, Death sat in the vacant chair, and looked at you from every spot where *two* had walked of old!

You fancied, afterward, that the ticking of the little clock disturbed your sorrowful rest, (as if such woe could e'er know rest again!) and bore it away to another room—but you missed its tone, and restored it to its old place.

Does the clock upon the mantel keep a record? Ah! could it speak, what secrets might it not reveal, what mysteries unfold!

ANGEL WATCHERS.

BY LOUISE SCHEPLERN.

Mamma, you said last evening
When the baby laughed in sleep,
That a watch around his cradle,
The guardian angels keep.
That they were whispering stories
Of the Blessed Holy Child,
Or lullaby songs of Heaven
Were chanting when baby smiled.

And, you know, you said, the Father,
While your face lit up with joy,
When he sent us angel watchers,
Would surely send us Roy:
And although we cannot see him,
(Oh, mamma, if we could!)
He is grieved when we are sinful,
And is glad when we are good.

To-day, when we were reading
Out of God's holy word,
You said when we asked believing,
Our prayers were always heard.
So I prayed if Roy was near me,
Though his face I might not see,
When he whispered to the baby
He would speak a word to me.

So, beside the baby kneeling,
I have waited all day long,
With my face pressed to the pillow,
I listened for the song;
But though he smiled quite often,
And twice he laughed outright,
I could not hear a whisper,
Though, indeed, I prayed I might.

And Roy often told me, mamma,
Before he went away,
He would think of us in Heaven,
And would love us every day.
You say he watches o'er us,
And I know it must be true,
But mamma, if baby hears him,
Oh, mamma, may I hear too?

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—The last time we went fishing was in September. Our friend Bimm asked us to go down the river about four miles with him after white perch. We hired a boat, and started at six in the morning. To our dismay we found the tide running up at a furious rate, and when we got into the boat and cast off, Bimm was so slow in getting his oar in the water that we drifted three hundred yards up stream before beginning work. After an hour's hard labor we got a mile upon our journey, when Bimm asked if it would make any difference to us if we changed oars with him. He said he was accustomed to row upon the starboard side. While we were changing places the boat floated back about a quarter of a mile. Then came another fearful tug, and we were within a mile of our destination, when Bimm said he was now convinced he had made a mistake. He could row better with the oar he had at first. So we changed again, and as Bimm stopped to wipe the perspiration from his crimson brow, we slipped back half a mile. Another frightful struggle, and we were within a short distance of the place, when Bimm said he must rest; he should die if he rowed another stroke. So, while we rested, we floated back another half mile. Finally we reached the fishing-ground, and then Bimm wanted to go ashore and lie down in the shade. But we were determined to fish. So both of us stayed in the boat, and fastening a stone to the painter, we dropped it overboard and came to anchor. We sat there fishing with our backs to the shore, and with the heat at nearly 150 degrees, for half an hour. At first we had a nibble or two, but after awhile all indications of the presence of fish ceased. Presently we heard an exclamation from Bimm; and looking up, we found that the stone had slipped from the rope, and that we had drifted out into the middle of the river and a mile up stream. Then we rowed back, and as we could not find another stone, we stuck one of the oars in the mud and tied the boat to that. Then we caught two small sunfish. Then both of us got splendid bites at the same time. We pulled up quickly, the fish evidently struggling violently all the time, and when the hooks reached the surface we found that Bimm's line was tangled with ours and that neither of us had a bite. A few moments afterward Bimm's hook caught fast in the bottom, and when he gave the line a violent jerk to loosen it, the cord broke in half, and the boat rocked so that the bait-box fell overboard. We kept on fishing, but just then the oar pulled out of the mud, slipped through the loop in the rope and floated off. The prospect of having to go home with one oar seemed so horrible, that we kicked off our boots, stripped off our coat and swam after the lost oar. We got it and were dragged into the boat by Bimm just as we had made up our mind to go to the bottom. When we started for home, the tide had turned and we had to row four miles against it. We got home about eight o'clock and found that the man who owned the boat had just made up his mind to offer a reward for our arrest for stealing the craft. We could have endured his profanity with patience, but it was very hard when we reached our house to have Mrs. Adeler come to the door and ask us where the fish were, and to say that she had asked a few friends around for a white perch supper. We had two sunfish, one ham sandwich and innumerable blisters on our hands. That was all. When we fish again we will take along a wiser man than Bimm.

—Old Mr. Collamer, one of the members of our church, is extremely deaf. Last Sunday the clergyman during his sermon, had occasion to introduce a quotation, and as it was quite long he brought the volume with him, and when the time came he picked up the book and began to read from it. We always sing the Old Hundred doxology after sermon at our church, and Mr. Collamer seeing the pastor with the book thought the time had come, so while the minister was reading, he opened his hymn-book at the place. Just as the clergyman laid the volume down the man sitting next to Mr. Collamer began to yawn, and Mr. Collamer thinking he was about to sing immediately broke out into Old Hundred at the top of his voice. As the clergyman was just beginning "secondly," and as there was of course perfect silence in the church, the effect of Mr. Collamer's vociferation was very startling. But the good old man didn't notice that anything was the matter, so he kept right on and sang the entire verse through. When he concluded he observed that everybody else seemed to be quiet, excepting a few who were laughing, so he leaned over and said out loud to the man who yawned, "What's the matter with this congregation anyhow? Why don't they go home?" The man turned scarlet, and the perspiration broke out all over him, for he felt that the eyes of the congregation were upon him, and he knew that he would have to yell to make Mr. Collamer hear. So he touched his lips with his finger as a sign for the old man to keep quiet. But Mr. Collamer misunderstood the motion. "Goin' to sing another hymn, hey? All right," and he began to fumble his hymn-book again. Then the sexton sailed up the aisle, and explained matters out loud to Mr. Collamer, and that gentleman subsided while the minister proceeded with his discourse. The elders have written Mr. Collamer a note requesting him in the future not to join in the sacred harmony. The effect is too appalling upon the ribald boys in the gallery.

—Chubb belongs to a temperance society, of which, indeed, he is the president. His cow has given him a great deal of trouble lately, jumping fences and hooking people with her horns. So Chubb obtained a bit of board about two feet square, and fastening it to the cow's horns, permitted it to hang down over her eyes and forehead. This he thought would cure her. Then he turned her loose in the field. The next morning early an advertising agent came along, and as Chubb's field faced right on a much-travelled turnpike, and as the cow had a habit of standing with her head toward the road, close to the fence, it occurred to him that Chubb's blind-board would be a conspicuous and somewhat humorous place on which to paint a bitters' advertisement. So he took his paint-pot and brushes and decorated the board with this inscription—"*Take Brown's Bitters for your stomach's sake. They make the best morning cocktail.*" That afternoon the secretary of the temperance society happened to pass by, and as his eye caught sight of the inscription, his soul was filled with horror. He ran back and summoned the Board of Directors, and that body went out and officially inspected the blind-board on Chubb's cow. Then they called a meeting of the society; and as there seemed to be little doubt that Chubb was deliberately giving in this manner, circulation to scandalous and pernicious information respecting cocktails, and endeavoring to induce the public to drink bitters, a fine of $25 was imposed; and then, by a unanimous vote, he was expelled from the association. The matter, we believe, was subsequently explained, and Chubb turned the blind-board over, with the lettered side against the cow. He is now inquiring for the residence of the advertising agent.

—Mr. Magoffin's roof has not been in very good condition for some time past, and when the snow-storm came the other day, he thought it would be better to shovel the snow off in order to prevent leakage. He chose for the work the time while Mrs. Magoffin was out. When he got upon the roof it struck him that he might perform the task more expeditiously by rolling up a huge snow-ball around the roof, and hurling it off in one enormous lump. Just as he completed the ball and got it to the edge, Mrs. Magoffin returned, and was standing on the front-door step, discussing the servant-girl question and the unnatural price of butter, with a friend who happened to be passing. She had on her new winter bonnet and all her other frills and fixings just from the mantuamaker's. Mr. Magoffin never thought of looking first to see if the coast was clear. He gave the ball a shove, and then peeped over. He saw it fall and strike Mrs. Magoffin's bonnet and crush her to the earth and submerge her in snow. He did not hesitate. He knew what his fate would be if Mrs. Magoffin suspected his guilt. He rushed through the trap-door, dashed down-stairs and got under the bed. In a few moments Mrs. Magoffin came up, raging like a tiger. He lay perfectly quiet, listening to her and feeling entirely safe. But after awhile she saw his boot sticking out from the bed, and she comprehended the situation at once, and moving the bedstead, she came at him with the poker. "Inflammatory rheumatism," Magoffin said it was that kept him in the house, when his friends asked him where he had been for the last two weeks; but he was never able to explain how rheumatism could have left such scars on his forehead. Mrs. Magoffin knew, but she was silent.

—A man who owns an umbrella need not buy a barometer, nor need he go to the expense of subscribing to a newspaper for the purpose of reading the "Probabilities" in order to ascertain what kind of weather there will be. His umbrella is enough. It is really extraordinary the influence an umbrella has on the weather. Every one has experienced it. You think in the morning when you leave home that it looks like rain. You take your umbrella with you, and it invariably clears off when you reach your place of business. You do this on a dozen successive mornings when rain appears to be impending, and it always clears up. Finally you leave your umbrella one evening at the office. You are detained on your way home, and before you can get to the house you are drenched to the skin with a soaking shower. The next morning it looks threatening, but you think you can get down-town before it rains, and as you have one umbrella at the office, you don't take another. Six or seven showers occur on the way down and during the day; but just as you start for home with the umbrella, the sun comes out bright and beautiful and stays out. You carry the umbrella constantly for a couple of weeks, and there is never a drop of rain. One morning you leave it at home, and about noon a steady drizzle begins. Then you rush around to a shop and buy a new umbrella, and before you get a hundred yards down the street, the weather clears up again. In the same manner if it is pouring in torrents in the morning when you leave the house, and you put on your heaviest rubber boots and take your biggest umbrella, the sun will come out about ten o'clock, and you will have to go around feeling ridiculous in those boots, and weary of the weight of that umbrella. The mysterious action of umbrellas and rubber boots upon the clouds is one of the most startling of the phenomena of nature. Precisely why a bundle of green gingham and whalebone ribs should have such an effect, we do not pretend to understand. The matter ought to be investigated by a committee of Congress.

—A very painful controversy is raging at present in Fiji over a point of etiquette. One party contends that only the man should be permitted to dance around the fire when a missionary is being cooked, while the other party hold that the women should be allowed to enter the circle and participate in the dance. Thus far the anti-women people have the best of the dispute, and it is feared that they will carry the day. Our own personal experience in these matters has been singularly small, and we can hardly speak with authority upon this particular subject. But we observe with much regret the tendency of the Fijians to exclude women from a share in their merry-makings, and to reduce her to a level with inferior beings. Simple politeness we should think—a mere gentlemanly instinct—would prompt these men to permit women to take part in these festivities, especially when it is reflected that women have precisely the same interest in seeing that the missionary is well done as the men have, and moreover that they may probably be able to offer some valuable suggestions respecting the best methods of preparing the gravy. We had hoped that these controversies upon the woman question were ended, but it seems that it is hard to induce men to concede justice to their weaker fellow beings. We trust that we may soon be able to record the fact that these ungenerous differences are healed, and that the bounteous provisions of nature and of the theological seminaries may be enjoyed by both sexes alike.

1874. 1874.

OUR OPENING STORIES

FOR

THE NEW YEAR.

Davy Crockett on the Track;

OR,

The Cave of the Counterfeiters.

BY FRANK CARROLL,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE," "JOHN FAIRMORE'S PLOT," ETC.

This captivating story, which has for its hero that far-famed hunter and backwoodsman of Tennessee, Col. Davy Crockett, will be commenced in the POST of Jan. 3, 1874. (No. 28.) It is a first-class romance, and one which we are happy to be able to announce for the opening of the New Year. We shall also begin, a short time afterward, a fascinating novelet of English life entitled

The Ghost of Norman Park.

BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD;

to be followed by the thrilling romance of Northern and of Tropical life—

THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Also, by a new story from the pen of BURR THORNBURY, whose late work, "JESSIE DALE, *The Conductor's Daughter*," now being published in this paper, has excited much interest by its strange plot and striking incidents. His new serial will be entitled

HARD TIMES;

OR,

THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873—74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., also will be of the highest character.

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PLOT FOR PLOT.

This casket threatens; men who hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages.
—*Shakespeare.*

Brown wondered not a little at the trifling message with which his master had entrusted him as he drove to Claudia's house. He had seldom gone on any less important errand than the delivery of some valuable present or very particular letter, and he was a good deal puzzled at being made the bearer of nothing of more consequence than a bouquet of hot-house flowers and a little twisted note.

Lord Wedderburn had given him a hint that his services would be put in requisition in future instead of the smart little page who generally went between the two houses, and who made it a matter of great glorification that he could see the celebrated actress so often in the seclusion of her own home.

"Wished his lordship would send me, did she?" Brown said to himself, recalling Lord Wedderburn's words. "And then my lord tips me a sovereign, and hints—gives me a good broad one, indeed—that ma'amselle requires some service at my hands. What can it be, I wonder? She don't like Lord Nortonshall, that's plain, though he can't see it. There's something up. Well, if she wants me I'm at her service. She's a sweet-spoken, pretty creature—that's what she is."

When the cab stopped, he met Dorothy's sour greeting with a bland smile, and wished her good day with the utmost politeness.

"Is mademoiselle at home?" he inquired, softly, showing his white teeth, as the old servant declared, "like a grinning ape."

"Yes," she replied, curtly.

She would have said "No" if she dared.

"Can I see her?"

"Yes."

Brown smiled at the old woman's reception of him, but bowed very graciously nevertheless.

"Prudish," he said to himself. "Thinks me and my master sinners past all redemption, I have no doubt, and her mistress on the high road to perdition through any connection with us. Well, well, she need have no fears on the latter score. Mademoiselle Claudia will take no harm at our hands."

None, indeed, for the pale face did not light up into the faintest semblance of a smile, nor the languid eyes brighten in the slightest degree at the sight of the flowers he laid before her.

Claudia simply said that Lord Nortonshall was very kind, and laid the bouquet and the note aside without further comment. Brown delivered his master's compliments, and wished to know if Mademoiselle Claudia were well.

"Quite, thank you."

She paused after her reply, feeling very much puzzled to know how to say what she wanted to say to this valet, who might, after all, be completely a creature of his master's, and betray her.

"None the worse for yesterday evening, Lord Nortonshall bade him say he hoped."

"Not at all, thank you. You knew I was there?" she added, after a pause.

"I did, madam."

"I went there partly to try and find something I had lost."

"And you succeeded, madam?"

"No."

"I am sorry."

"So am I. That was part of my motive; the rest was to see his lordship's house. I think you can help me to both my objects."

Brown bowed with something of a puzzled look.

"He would have much pleasure," he said.

"I think I may trust you. You were surprised to see me there, doubtless?"

"Not surprised, madam. We were ordered to expect you. I was—you will pardon me if I say it—grieved."

"You are kind to say so," Claudia returned, a spasm of pain crossing her pale face. "I know how busy the world must be with my name; but I had a powerful reason for mixing with the party last night. I am afraid there is mischief afoot that I can prevent by vigilance; but I must have your aid."

"All that I can give you may rely on."

Claudia hesitated a moment how she should tell him what she wanted without arousing his suspicions too much. It was so difficult to talk to a servant—to tell him that she suspected his master of having stolen the phials with any evil intent—and yet she must have his aid to recover them.

"He must think what he likes," she said to herself, in desperation. "I must tell him."

She took the empty casket and touched the spring. The lid flew up, revealing the vacant velvet nest where the two phials had been.

"You see those two spaces?" she said.

"Yes, ma'amselle."

"Did you ever see in your master's hands, or anywhere in his possession, two small phials which would fit in those places?"

"No, madame."

"I have lost two such, and I have strong reasons for believing that his lordship took them out—in sport, of course, but under circumstances which make it impossible for me to ask him about them."

"I have not seen any such to my knowledge," Brown said, not a little mystified by her eagerness, and the tenor of her questions.

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure, madame," he replied; "but if I should—"

"You will easily know them," she said, eagerly.

"Will you describe them to me? Had they any speciality beyond their shape? I can see from this—" touching the casket as he spoke—"that they were flat and oblong."

"They were of rare old Venetian glass, very curiously cut, and almost entirely covered with gilding. There was an inscription upon each of them in Moorish or Arabic characters, entwined with a pattern of leaves and grotesque figures. You could not mistake them."

"I will look out for them, mademoiselle. And what if my lord has them?"

"Let me know instantly, without a moment's delay."

"I will."

"And where he keeps them. You will not fail me?"

"You may depend upon me."

"And you will not betray me to your master?"

"Certainly not."

"You will wonder why I am so earnest about this, I dare say, and why I ask you to do what I want. I will tell you. I have no doubt his lordship took those bottles for a joke, little knowing what they contained; but he might unintentionally do incalculable mischief with them. They contain deadly poison—Venetian poison—for aught I know, the very drugs the Borgias used. Two or three drops would destroy life, and I tremble to think of the risk there is in their being in hands whose owner is ignorant of their deadly and terrible properties."

"And my lord does not know?" Brown asked, terrified at the thought of his careless master being in possession of such fatal drugs.

Claudia hesitated for a moment before she replied. She could scarcely bring herself to tell a falsehood, and yet she could not explain to Lord Nortonshall's servant what she knew right well to be the truth—viz., that his master had taken them with intent to murder, the proposed victim being his most innocent and unhappy wife.

"He does not," she replied, and her voice was low and hesitating as she uttered the necessary falsehood. "How should he?"

Brown gave vent to a low whistle, and looked scared.

"It is a bad business," he said, "if my lord does not know. If he does, of course, he'll be careful what he does with them."

"He thinks them simple narcotics," Claudia said, with a painful flush on her face which did not escape Brown's penetrating eyes, "and he doubtless took them to play some trick on others."

"I dare say," the valet replied, gravely. "My master used to like practical joking. He's been different lately, since he married my lady."

"Any joke with those phials would have an awful ending," Claudia said, with a sick shudder. "You will not fail me? You will help me to find them if you can?"

"I will do my utmost—you may rely upon that. I am glad you have honored me with your confidence in the matter. I shall not be working in the dark now, as it were."

There was a meaning in his tone that Claudia strove to ignore, and she tried to answer carelessly.

"I shall feel more comfortable now I know I have your aid," she said, "and I think and hope that with it I may prevent mischief. And now I have something else to ask you," she went on, assuming a gayety she did not feel, though her cheek still kept its painful flush.

"Name it, madame; you have only to command me."

"I have a plot against your master. Lord Wedderburn and I have laid a wager, and we want your help to win it."

"As how?"

"In this wise: for this past week or two Lord Nortonshall has seemed chary of admitting any one to his house, especially to the newly-fitted rooms."

"He has had some strong reasons, I believe."

"Of course—that's just it. Now, Lord Wedderburn and myself declared last night that we would find an entrance when he least expected it. Can you get me a key to that jealously-guarded Bluebeard's chamber?"

The far-seeing valet was not deceived by her airy manner. He saw the trembling hand and eager eye which accompanied her requests, and knew they were prompted by some deeper motive than appeared on the surface.

"My Lord Wedderburn's in it, is he?" he said to himself. "What's it all about, I wonder? What can they want a key of my lady's rooms for? There'll be a jolly row if they are caught there. However, that's no business of mine. If I do it I'll manage not to appear in it. It is difficult to get entrance to that staircase, mademoiselle," he said to Claudia. "My lord, for some reason or other, made a great fuss about that door and the keys. However, I will try."

"Thank you," she said, warmly.

"If I fail, it sha'n't be my fault."

"And you'll be secret?"

"I will, madame. For my own sake as much as yours," he added, mentally.

It was no small service he was undertaking, but he would have promised more to get at the bottom of the mystery he saw there was over the affair. That there was more in it than a mere playful wager amongst friends, Claudia's scarcely concealed agitation told only too plainly.

She drew a little ring from her finger when she had finished speaking—a sparkling diamond, of considerable value.

"Will you take this as a keepsake from me?" she said, holding it out to Brown, who blushed and stammered like a shy girl before her. "I cannot offer you payment for what you do, and I dare say you mistake my motives. I cannot help that. Some day you will know that they are good ones; but you may take that little keepsake without any hesitation, and your wife, if you have one, either in the present or the future, may wear it without a blush. It is neither a stage jewel nor the price of any action which should call up a blush on an honest woman's cheek."

"I am sure it is not, mademoiselle," the valet said, bowing low over the hand she held out to him; "but it is too valuable a gift for me."

"Your master gives you presents of greater value, and for less service, I have no doubt," she said, quietly. "Let me have the pleasure of feeling that I have made some slight acknowledgment of your attention to me."

She gravely bade him good-bye, and then sat down to think. She felt by an intuitive instinct that he would not betray her to his master, and that through him she should find out something; but she felt frightened at her own temerity at having used Lord Wedderburn's name in the matter. What if he should hear of it, and spoil everything?

She resolved to make a clean breast of it to him, and throw herself upon his mercy.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MY LADY IS EXPECTED IN TOWN.

But when I know my heart's supreme content
In its own clearness—not as to act alone,
But wish; nor wish alone, but thought of sin.
When I know this, and think of yesternight—
And worse than yesternight turns out to-day—
I 'gin to think the world is made of hate.
—*J. Sheridan Knowles.*

Claudia thought long and earnestly over what she should say to Lord Wedderburn. Her heart was very full when she sat down after Brown's departure. She knew full well what was being said of her, and his polite manner had hardly concealed that the world's thought was his also.

"I must not think of it," she said, pressing her hands to her hot forehead. "I must put the hateful knowledge quite away from me, or I shall go mad."

She sat, pen in hand, uncertain how to word what she had to say, for his lordship was, of course, totally ignorant of any plot, merry or otherwise, to get into Lord Nortonshall's house, and Brown might inadvertently betray her.

"It must be done," she said, at length. "Explanations will do afterward. He will guess I want his help, and he is a gentleman and can be trusted."

Her note was very hurriedly penned after all.

"BAYSWATER, Wednesday.

"MY DEAR LORD WEDDERBURN—I have been taking your name in vain, and have declared you implicated with me in a merry wager respecting the Bluebeard's chamber, which Lord Nortonshall keeps so carefully closed in his house. Will you uphold me in my wickedness, or will you hold me up to contempt as a teller of white lies and conventional fibs? I don't think you will do the latter; so if anything should come to your ears, please be a party to my sins, and believe me, very truly yours,

"CLAUDIA WYNNE.

"Viscount Wedderburn, Polyphemus Club."

Lively enough to read, but written with what pain only Claudia herself knew.

Lord Wedderburn happened to be at his club, and her messenger was bidden to wait.

"What does she mean?" his lordship said to himself, when he had read the note. "I don't believe she has made any *merry* wager about Nortonshall in any way. She means me to think so, and the words she has written are lively enough, but the writing is tremulous, and, as I live, here is the trace of a tear. All's not so bright as it seems, poor girl, in her life, that's certain. Back her up in her story—of course I will, even if it were a fib. So here goes."

He sat down and scribbled a note, which relieved Claudia's mind not a little when her messenger returned with it.

"POLYPHEMUS, Wednesday.

"MY DEAR MDLLE. CLAUDIA—Do what you like with my name; I am sure it could not be in better keeping. It is quite safe with you. If I chance to see Nortonshall and am accused of anything in which you are implicated, I shall declare myself your accomplice on the spot, knowing well that I can get into no mischief through you. I hear this morning that Lady N. returns to town almost immediately. I cannot think what Nortonshall means by the way he goes on. Hoping you are none the worse to-day for our late, or, rather, early hours this morning, believe me, faithfully yours,

"WEDDERBURN.

"Mdlle. Claudia Wynne, Bayswater."

"He is very kind and good," Claudia said to herself, on reading his note, "and he thinks I am in fun with my Lord Nortonshall. Oh, if I dare tell any one but poor Frank Vavasour the truth! But I dare not—I must not. I must work my way and bear my burden alone."

A week passed slowly by after this, seeming interminable to Claudia, who, but for the necessary excitement of her business, would have fallen ill of sheer anxiety and suspense, and there came no word from Brown that he had discovered her phials, or could give her the key.

At Carlton-terrace all was ready for Lady Nortonshall's return to town, and a messenger had been despatched to Yorkshire to be in readiness.

Austin Bertram still lay insensible on his sick bed, ever mixing in his ravings the two names which had so startled Francis Vavasour as he sat beside him, telling many a terrible story of crime and wrong in which he seemed to have been an actor, but giving no clue to the whereabouts of the man he so constantly spoke of, or indeed affording any indication whether he was alive or dead.

Frank watched him very kindly and carefully—not alone from the desire which possessed him to find out all there was to be told about Jasper Glosson, but from pity for his forlorn and desolate position.

He seemed to have no friends, this strange man. A few formal inquiries in the first few days of his illness were all that were ever made about him; and but for Frank he would have had no one near him but a hired nurse—a good sort of woman in her way, with nothing of the Mrs. Gamp about her, but utterly devoid of sympathy or feeling in her ministrations.

Many a long hour did the young man spend in the darkened room, striving to comfort and soothe the sufferer, who tossed and moaned and muttered through all the weary time in a most distressing way.

He talked of all sorts of places and people, and once the young man was startled by hearing Lady Nortonshall's name.

"Alma Bouverie," he said, in the sharp, shrill tone of fever, "she has the cross. I saw it! It was he who stayed Jasper Glosson's hand! Let him look to it from this hour."

He puzzled much over this incomprehensible speech, but could make nothing of it. It so happened that he did not know anything about the cross, or if he did had only heard it casually mentioned; so the words told him nothing at all. They touched no chord of memory or knowledge which could guide him to any clue.

He found himself thinking more of Alma than the sick man after he had heard her name, and longing with an uncontrollable anxiety to see her.

Was she well-treated in that far-away castle, or did her husband's servants follow her husband's example, and heap all sorts of indignities on her head? He need have been under no apprehension had he known the truth. The servants one and all took their cue from the housekeeper, and treated her with unvarying respect and attention.

Indeed, she felt happier there than she had done for many months. The quiet and repose, and the absence of all agitating events, soothed and relieved her, and though she continued sad and depressed, her strength, which had sadly failed her through all she had undergone, began slowly to return. It was with a feeling of terror, therefore, that she heard of Lord Nortonshall's orders, not addressed to her, but to the housekeeper, that she should be in readiness to return to town on a certain day which he named. Mrs. Jones gave the letter to her with tears in her eyes, for she was beginning to love her gentle young mistress very dearly.

"I am very sorry, my lady," she said; "I did hope you were going to stay here till the bright weather came."

"I hoped so too," she replied, with a quivering lip. "I was learning to be happy here with you."

"I am glad to hear you say that, my lady. You are very kind."

"It is you who have been kind. I think I should have died but for you, and now I am to go away. If I go, I shall never see you again."

"Oh, yes, my lady, you will. In the autumn, if we are spared. My lord will come to Nortonshall then; he is always here in autumn."

"He may be, but I shall not."

"I hope you will, my lady. My lord will have got over his anger and suspicion by that time, and we shall have you back again as blithe and happy as the little birds that sing in the trees yonder."

"I shall not be with him if he comes—he will have got rid of me by that time. Oh, Mrs. Jones, is he not cruel never to send me a line—only orders as though I were a child or a slave?"

"You will have a letter by the next post, no doubt," the old woman said, though in her heart she knew that none would come. "My lord was busy, maybe, and only had time to write this one to-day."

"Busy!"

Alma's fair face darkened with a look of intense scorn.

"Yes, dawdling about with her. I never thought I should be jealous of my husband, Heaven knows; but I can't help it."

"It is very natural, my lady; but I hope there is no cause."

"There is—bitter cause. All London rings with the wretched story. An actress, too—a painted, bold-faced thing. It is hard to be supplanted by such a one as that."

"It is hard, my lady; but there'll come an end to it, never fear. A man may go astray almost past repentance; but if he has a true and honest wife, there comes a time when he turns back to her in sorrow and shame for his past wickedness. My lord will know his wife's truth some day, and all the painted Delilahs in the world will be nothing to him then."

"No," said Alma, despairingly, "no such day will ever come to me. He believes me guilty of faithlessness to him and my marriage vows, and not even an angel's tongue could make him feel the truth. Oh, it was a cruel, cruel letter he sent to you—a hard, cruel, cold letter!"

So it was, considering my Lord Nortonshall had written it concerning the wife he had sworn at the altar to love and cherish. He must have studied how cutting he could make it to his unhappy wife.

"Carlton-terrace, Dec. 9th, 18—.

"MADAM—I desire you will be so good as to see that all is prepared for Lady Nortonshall to return to town on the 14th inst. I purpose spending Christmas at my town residence, and I wish her ladyship to join me there. Brown will be at Nortonshall to attend her on her journey, also her maid, who has my orders for her conduct, and every instruction for her ladyship's comfort. You will please pay every attention to any requests her ladyship may make, so far as they are in accordance with the wishes I expressed to you before her arrival in Yorkshire.

"NORTONSHALL.

"Mrs. Jones, Nortonshall Castle, Yorks."

"It is hard and cruel to you, my lady," the housekeeper said, when her mistress had read the letter a second time; "but I dare say my lord means it well. He is very anxious for your comfort."

"Very anxious that the world shall think so. Oh, Mrs. Jones, I dread to go more than I can tell you. Can you not come with me?"

"I wish I could, my lady."

"Oh, don't you think he would let you? We must have a housekeeper in London, you know, and he has such faith in you. I shall feel safer with you near me. You would not let them kill me, would you?"

"Hush, my dear—hush! Don't talk like that."

"That is what they mean to do, you know," Alma said, wildly. "Who's to know how they do it? There'll be a grand funeral and plenty of sham grief, and then he'll be free—free. But he sha'n't. I'll come back from the next world and make his life such a burden that he'll lay it down in desperation!"

"My lady, my lady, don't, I beg of you—you terrify me," the housekeeper said, for Alma had risen from her seat, and was pacing the room with flashing eyes and wild gestures. "No harm will come to you; you will be as safe there as here."

"Yes, with you with me. Oh, do write and ask if you may come too. He will take no notice of me, but he might of you. Promise me you will try and get leave."

"I will, my dear—I will," said the old lady.

She would have done anything to help her mistress, and the writing of a letter, and to her master too, was about as formidable and disagreeable a task as any she could have undertaken.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LORD NORTONSHALL REVEALS HIS SECRET.

Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor stain that whiter skin of hers than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die. —*Shakespeare.*

It was with no small misgiving that Mrs. Jones had suffered herself to be persuaded to write, and it was a very timid little letter that she sent to her master in London. She humbly begged to be allowed to accompany her lady up to town, alleging as a reason Alma's delicacy of health and spirits, and hinting that it was necessary she should have some one about her whom she knew, in the unstrung condition of her nerves.

"And I do hope my lord won't be angry," she said, as she folded it up. "I've only said what I felt was my duty, my lady. It is not fit for you to go to the town house quite alone. You may not like the maid he is going to send either."

"I sha'n't if she is his choosing," Alma said, bitterly. "Don't be afraid, Mrs. Jones, Lord Nortonshall won't be angry with you—or, at any rate, he won't visit it on you. I shall hear of it, no doubt, but it won't signify. Nothing will signify to me long when once he gets me into his hands in that dreary London house."

Lord Nortonshall was greatly amused by the housekeeper's quaint little epistle.

"So my lady is nervous, is she!" he said to himself, with an evil smile, when he had read it. "I shouldn't wonder. I'm afraid she'll have to put up with her nervousness until I cure her. Thinks she should have some one with her that she knows, does she! She's a good old soul, is Jones, but she won't suit my London establishment. No, no; she must stay in Yorkshire, my lady's nerves notwithstanding."

He smiled wickedly to himself as he sat down to his writing-table and indited a very polite note.

"CARLTON-TERRACE, Dec. 11, 18—.

"MADAM—I am favored with yours of this morning, and beg to say in reply that my arrangements are already made, and will not permit of my having more than one housekeeper in town, and as I am already provided with a very excellent and efficient person in that capacity, I must decline your services here. As to your attending upon Lady Nortonshall, that is entirely out of the question, as the maid I have engaged for her is in every respect suitable. I have to thank you for the personal attendance which I hear you have bestowed upon her ladyship while in Yorkshire, which must have materially added to your duties and responsibilities. Considering all this, and my own arrangements for town, I think the care of the castle and the household there quite sufficient responsibility for you; and her ladyship, I am sure, will see the good sense of what I have arranged. You will please, therefore, not encourage her in any of her extravagant notions, and believe me, with much gratitude for your kind intentions, yours,

"NORTONSHALL.

"Mrs. Jones, Nortonshall, Yorkshire."

"And a very proper head-of-the-family sort of a letter it is," his lordship said, when he had finished it. "The dear old lady ought to have it framed and glazed—it will stop her coming prying here, and that's all I want."

"I knew it was no use," said Alma, despondingly, when she read her husband's answer; "he would agree to nothing that he thought would make me happier or better. I shall go away and die all alone in London, without a friend near me, or any one to speak a kind word to me, or waste a moment's thought off me or my wretched fate."

Mrs. Jones tried to calm her fears, but it was no use. She was not to be comforted or roused in her depression, and only begged to be left alone.

"Don't say any more about it," she urged; "leave me alone; don't talk to me—I only get more terrified as each moment passes. Only another day, and then my jailers will come and fetch me."

"Don't say jailers, dear lady—attendants. My lord may have found some nice woman that you will like for your maid. Let us hope so, at any rate."

"She will be none the less my jailer. Don't talk any more about it, dear Mrs. Jones. Be sure my fate is decided as far as it lies in Lord Nortonshall's power to fix anything. The woman, whoever she is, will be his faithful tool. Say no more about it—you have done all you could do for me."

So Mrs. Jones was fain to be silent, and busy herself about her lady's packing, and in due time Brown and his companion arrived.

The new lady's-maid was a smart, bustling person, all finery and bounce, with a voluble tongue, and a sharp, uncaring expression of face, who took possession of her silent mistress from the moment of her entering the house. The housekeeper was completely ousted from any attendance on Lady Nortonshall, the self-possessed damsel constituting herself her guardian and duenna at once.

Her name was Langham, she informed the servants—"*Miss* Langham"—and she managed to impress the servants with a great idea of her consequence, and to make them thoroughly dislike her before she had been many minutes in the house.

"She ain't much account," the coachman said, when the servants' hall was in full evening conclave; "said the carriage wasn't what she'd been accustomed to, seeing as the rumble wasn't padded to her liking. Brown, he took her down a peg—he was showing her over the place, he was."

"*Mr.* Brown—coachman!" said a pert-looking, pretty girl, one of the housemaids, to whom the valet was the bright particular star of her existence. "He always expects us to call him Mr. Brown."

"Does he? Well, he'll have to expect a long time before I shall twist my mouth into mistering him. I'm as good a man as a valet any day, and I'd rather a deal handle my horses than spend my life fiddle-faddling over my master's clothes and nicknacks, let alone doing all his dirty work."

"But Mr. Brown doesn't do any dirty work," said the girl, interpreting the words literally.

"Oh, no, of course not!" the man retorted, sarcastically. "*Mr.* Brown's hands are very clean, they are! Here's his very good health, and yours, too, my dear—and don't you go hankering after what you can't have, or your pretty little hands won't keep quite so white as they are now, maybe. You can't touch pitch and not be defiled, you know."

"I don't know what you mean," the girl retorted, indignantly. "Stick to what you were talking about, and leave me alone, can't you?"

"What I was talking about—oh, how Brown took down the fine new madam from London. 'Shall we send straight to Long Acre and have one built expressly for you?' said he, and she flounced out of the coach-house as if she'd been a duchess instead of a lady's maid."

"She's more like a mistress than a maid," said another of the girls, "and we're to call her 'Miss.' She's a nasty stuck-up thing, that's what she is; and I pity my lady, that I do, having to have her about her."

"My lady's to be pitied for more than that," the coachman said. "I shall never forget her, poor thing, when I brought her from the station. As to this new woman, Langham—Miss Langham, forsooth! she—"

"Will thank you all to let her name alone," said the voice of the person in question, who had come in unperceived. "She's here to attend on Lady Nortonshall, not to be discussed in the servants' hall."

She took something she wanted from the housemaid, and left the room without another word, leaving them to guess how much or how little she had heard of their remarks.

In her lady's room she reigned supreme. "My lady will do this, my lady will do that," she would affirm in a confident manner, that completely cowed the gentle little housekeeper, and made her feel more sorry than ever for her master's wife.

With all her apparent volubility, "Miss Langham" could keep her own counsel, and this quality had been one of her chief recommendations to Lord Nortonshall. He had engaged her from the house of one of his female acquaintances—a lady whose reputation was not in the least degree doubtful, and to whom he had bluntly stated that he wanted a woman who was not particularly scrupulous.

"Langham will do for you," the lady had replied. "I cannot afford to keep her, or I wouldn't give her up."

"What can she do?"

"She can hold her tongue," was the reply, with a meaning look; and Langham was at once sent for by his lordship and engaged, with a brief intimation that she had better hold her tongue while in his service. She perfectly comprehended him, and replied pertly enough that she knew "When to talk and when to be still, however she might appear to gossip," and pocketed the gratuity he gave her with extreme nonchalance.

Brown did not care much for this new member of the household; indeed, Miss Langham pronounced him "quite a bear," so silent was he on the road from town. But Brown had other things to think about on that same journey. Bad as he knew his master to be, careless of his wife, infatuated about Claudia Wynne, dissipated in every way, still he did not suspect him of any deep-laid crime, either in fact or intent; but he had been startled into a terrible belief on the preceding evening.

His lordship had an antique cabinet, which he prized very highly, and of which he kept the keys always about him. Only once or twice during his service had the valet seen it open, and then it appeared to be filled with papers, trinkets, and many articles which looked like *souvenirs* of various sorts.

On the day before he started for the north, Brown noticed that his master drank deeply, more deeply than usual. When in this state he was apt to chatter to himself, to mutter what was passing in his mind; and many a secret never meant for his ears had his servant learned in consequence.

On the evening in question he shut himself into his study, or the room he called by that name, and Brown heard him fumbling and staggering about, but having no motive for entering he left him alone. Presently, however, he had occasion to go to his master for some last instructions about his journey.

He knocked at the door, but receiving no reply, he softly opened it, and went in. Lord Nortonshall was seated before the open cabinet, with papers and various articles strewed about him. He was talking to himself, and turning over something which lay before him.

Brown started, and then stood still, listening involuntarily, for the voice was terribly like a madman's, as the voice of an excited drunkard's always is. Lord Nortonshall spoke low and hurriedly; and the valet could see the gleam of something bright under his hand.

"The day after to-morrow!" he said. "Only a few short hours, and then, my lady, you are mine again—mine to do what I please with; my property, my wife! And I will do what I please—this or this!"

Brown drew a step nearer, and saw a glittering, slender dagger, and beside it Claudia's missing phials. He was unheard, and his master went mumbling on—

"Not this! No bloodshed! My lady must die a natural death. Ha! ha! a natural death! There shall be weepers and waiters, priests and mourners at my lady's funeral, and then, Claudia, for you and liberty!"

CHAPTER XL.

JASPER GLOSSON.

For this was my long vision's dreadful stress,
And when I waked my trouble was not less.
—*Hood.*

Brown made a slight involuntary movement in the silence that succeeded his master's wild words, and Lord Nortonshall started and turned round.

The sight of his valet standing behind him, cold and silent, sobered him on the instant, and with a muttered execration he hastily closed the lid of the cabinet and turned fiercely on him.

"What the deuce are you doing here?" he asked.

"Nothing, my lord."

Brown's face was impenetrable in its expression, and his voice was quite calm.

"How long have you been there?"

"I have only this moment come in, my lord."

"And what do you want now you are here?"

"Your orders for to-morrow, if your lordship pleases."

"I don't please. I don't believe you have only just come in. I believe you came listening—spying."

"Indeed, my lord, I had no such thought."

"Then your face belies you," Lord Nortonshall said, fiercely. And indeed Brown's paleness and confusion might well have passed for conscious guilt. "What did you see, or hear, or fancy?—for that would be the right word, after all."

"My lord, I saw and heard nothing, and fancied less," replied the valet, with the same unmoved manner.

"Nothing! You know I was not—well, as I ought to be; you had no business to come in without knocking in that way."

"I did knock, my lord—I knocked twice," Brown replied. "I knew your lordship was, as you say, not quite yourself, and to that fact I attributed your not hearing me. I only took the liberty of coming in after waiting some time."

"And you heard nothing—saw nothing—on your solemn oath?"

"On my solemn oath, my lord, I heard nothing but your voice. You were talking to yourself, and looking at something—it was none of my business to see what."

"Certainly not; it was none of your business. It would be hard if I could not be private sometimes. Now, about your journey. You are all ready for it?"

"Quite, my lord."

"And you thoroughly understand what you are to do?"

"Thoroughly, my lord."

"Then get out, and don't bother me any more about it."

"Very good, my lord."

Brown bowed and went his way, leaving his master in more perplexity than he chose to admit. He had not been so overcome with the liquor he had taken as not to notice the expression on his servant's face, and he felt proportionately enraged at it.

"I wish I could be certain how much he heard, or what he saw," he said to himself. "I know I was talking. My tongue runs like the very deuce when I have had an extra glass, and yet I think he is to be trusted. Any way, he could make nothing of anything he may have heard."

His lordship was mistaken. Brown had made a good deal of what he had heard and seen, and before he went northward dispatched a little note to Claudia:—

"Carlton-terrace, Dec. 12th, 18—.

"MADEMOISELLE—According to promise, I hasten to let you know all I have found out. Lord Nortonshall has the phials—I saw them in his hand last night; and from the circumstances under which I found them out, I cannot help thinking that their being in this house bodes no good. Cannot you invent some means of getting them back? With regard to the key of the locked-up rooms, I have not yet succeeded in getting one, and I almost fear it will be impossible. My lord seems to have some powerful motive in keeping any one from going in and out through the door at the end of the rooms prepared for her ladyship. May I respectfully beg that you will destroy this note, and believe me, your obedient servant, J. BROWN.

"Madlle. Claudia Wynne, Bayswater."

Claudia put the note away with a heavy heart; it was plain that Brown could do nothing more. She must coax both bottles and key from her admirer herself, and she resolved to bide her time and do it.

And so the days flew by, and Lady Nortonshall returned to town, and the fashionable world called and left cards, very anxious to see the lady about whom there were such strange reports current; and Alma received her friends with a very white face, and a subdued, quiet manner, suggestive either of fear or suffering.

Her husband was always by her side when visitors came, or she drove out—polite and courteous outwardly; but there was not one who did not go away from the house with the feeling that all was not right, that there was something under that apparent peace that the world did not see.

And so Christmas drew on—the time of "peace and good-will to men"—the time when the angels sang over the manger of the Saviour of the World—the time that marked the dawning of a new era upon earth, and brought "glad tidings of great joy" to a benighted people.

The season was unusually stormy; snow lay thick upon the ground, and the weather was intensely cold. Claudia was doing nothing. To an actress in her position the pantomimic season is a holiday, and thankful for the rest, she secluded herself at home as much as possible, and waited to see what turn events would take. Of Lord Nortonshall she saw but little; but one or two passionate notes assured her she was not forgotten, and hinted at a future of love and happiness for them both.

Austin Bertram was slowly recovering, the wreck of his former self, but subtle, crafty, and wicked as ever. Almost his first conscious words were to inquire what had passed during his insensibility, what he had said, &c., &c.

The nurse told him "Nothing," and, indeed, as far as she was concerned, it was nothing, for not one word of the sick man's ravings had any meaning for her save.

Austin Bertram was not satisfied with her assertion, and as soon as he was able to bear conversation he put the same question to Frank Vavasour, who still waited on him with friendly assiduity.

They were in the sick man's sitting-room, where he had once mixed a friendly glass of brandy and water for his young friend, and it had cost the invalid not a little resolution to bear the exertion of being dressed and brought down to the sofa. He was fearfully white and thin, and the thick beard he always wore made his white, hollow face more hollow still in appearance. Even in his delirium he had resisted all their efforts to make him have his beard removed, and they were obliged to content themselves with cutting it short, so that it might not incommode him as he tossed and rolled about in his feverish imaginings. It was growing now again, and he was congratulating himself on having kept it from any profane touch or razor.

"A fellow looks such an awful guy with his beard off," he said to Frank, after a survey of his hirsute adornments in the looking-glass, "especially after he's had such a thicket as mine. I'm glad you wer'n't such Goths as to shave me."

"It was no fault of ours," he replied, laughing. "We made various attempts, but you grew so tremendously obstreperous at the least touch upon your chin that the doctor's orders with respect to that wilderness of hair you wear had to be disobeyed."

"And very properly too. It seems instinct left me some small sense of propriety after all, though I was 'off my head,' as the old women say. You see I know full well what the beard does for me. I'm a passable-looking chap at present; but shave me, and I sink at once far below mediocrity in the scale of good looks. I trust my good sense stood my friend in another respect, and bridled my tongue. Did I talk much in my delirium? The nurse says I said nothing; but I know that's a lie. I've seen delirium too often not to know."

"Well, you talked, of course; but—"

"But what? Now, be a friend, and tell me what I talked about. I don't mean all the wild, disjointed rubbish that a fellow runs on with; but did I say anything you could put together and make sense of?"

"You said very little that any one could make sense of. When you are stronger I'll tell you all you did say."

"No, now—tell me now. I've more reasons than I can give you for wanting to know what I let fall when I lay yonder. Did I speak much of myself in my delirium?"

"Never, that I heard."

"The fates be thanked for that," he murmured to himself.

Frank Vavasour did not hear the words, nor see the expression of relief on his face as he spoke. He was busy over the fire, preparing some delicate mess for the sick man, whose appetite required constant humoring, and handling a little saucepan as deftly as a woman.

"I suppose it was the ordinary jumble of delirious fancies—all the balls and parties of the season, all the incidents of town life, and the names and faces of my friends jumbled together in one hideous nightmare—eh?"

"Well, yes, that and other things mixed up with it. In fact, you harped a good deal on one thing, Bertram, and made me not a little curious on the subject."

"And what may that subject be?"

"The whereabouts of a certain man named Jasper Gloxson."

"Great heaven!"

For his life Austin Bertram could not have suppressed the exclamation. He would have given worlds to have recalled it, but it was too late. Francis Vavasour had heard it, and had seen the terrible pallor which came over Bertram's face as he uttered it.

"What is it?" he said, coming to his side. "Are you worse?"

"A little. I am weak and giddy still, and the room seems to whirl round with me, that's all."

"Oh, I thought it was the name I mentioned. Can you tell me anything about that man?"

"Jasper Gloxson? No!" said Mr. Bertram, speaking, as it seemed, with an effort. "I have not heard his name for years—not since I went out to India."

"But you knew him once?"

"A little."

"Not intimately?"

"No."

"It is very odd, then."

"It is odd that his name should come into my head after all these years. What did I say about him?"

"Well, you accused him of many crimes—murder among the rest; and you made Claudia and myself very anxious to find him, if he is alive."

"Claudia?"

"Yes."

"What does she want with him?"

"He did her parents great wrong years ago, and committed a crime of which she holds the proof. I fancy he will find small mercy at her hands if ever he should turn up."

"I don't think he ever will turn up."

"Why? Men do reappear after years and years of absence, and at the most unexpected and unaccountable times."

"I don't think this one will. I fancy he is dead. I have heard him speak of this girl's mother, Maddalina Wynne. She was a very beautiful woman, and a fine singer."

"I do not believe he is dead, Bertram."

"And why not? What earthly reason can you have for thinking he is alive, when by your own account you never heard of him till I raved of him in the fever?"

"I do not know—a fancy, a presentiment, call it what you like, that I shall meet him some day, Bertram. I believe that man to have been the murderer of poor Mr. Bouverie."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.)

JESSIE DALE,

The Conductor's Daughter;

OR,

The Plot Against the Pennsylvania Railroad.

BY BURR THORNBURY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "ST. LEGER'S LOVE," "RAVENSWOOD," "SCALE, THE SCOUT," "AGNES AYRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHERWIN'S FAILURE.

The wonderful escape of Harry Lester from the prison in which Belmont Matthewson had confined him, and from which he had believed that by no possibility he could escape, chagrined and alarmed the chief of the junto, but did not dismay him. His securities against arrest and exposure were so great that he believed himself fully able to circumvent all attempts of the law or of individuals to bring him to justice. He laughed at justice, for had he not wherewith to purchase judges and juries? And did he not know that judges and juries had been and could again be purchased?

"I am as safe as Tweed," he replied; "and behold what *he* has done and is doing for himself!"

Vain fool! he knew not that even then the power of his great contemporary in villainy was threatened and weakened by the agencies of right, and was soon to be overthrown.

The thought of Tweed's success and immunity from molestation led Matthewson on to further reflections:

"I almost regret now that I did not accept my friend's invitation to join with him. See how he has prospered! And hardly a breath against him as yet! But my own enterprise promises as well, though I confess that it is more difficult than I at first believed; but the prize is also greater. I will persevere. Young Lester has escaped, but he can make no fatal disclosures. A month of silence will perhaps serve to quiet all suspicions. I have managed well; I can wait for results. In the meantime I will absent myself from public places, and give my undivided attention to the matter of securing the Day estate. Marbury at any moment may send me notice of the recovery of the person of Beatrice, and then the business will be quickly finished."

It must here be stated that although Cecil Parnell was of course aware that Mrs. Rowland was in the power of Jay Marbury, he had not revealed that important fact to Belmont Matthewson, partly because he had regard for solemn promises he had made to the former not to acquaint the latter with it, and partly because he did not wish to balk Marbury in his design of marrying the lady; for Cecil thought that his confederate was really interested in the lovely widow, and being in love himself, had great consideration for him on that account. "A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind." Therefore Marbury's duplicity had not been exposed to his superior as yet.

Sherwin, the secretary of Matthewson, still adhered to his intention to play into Marbury's hands, and had already "sighted" the precious documents. But the abstraction of them had not yet been effected.

But one morning Sherwin carried his design into partial execution. He obtained possession of the papers, and could have escaped with them; but to assure himself that the case really was as Marbury had represented it, he engaged in a careful examination of them, thinking to replace them if they did not support the alleged facts.

In this work he was surprised by Matthewson, who unexpectedly returned to his house to examine one of the very papers Sherwin had taken from the safe. Discovering the loss, Matthewson grew instantly suspicious.

The pitiable confusion of his secretary confirmed his belief that Sherwin was up to mischief.

"Where are the documents relating to the Day estate, Sherwin?" he demanded, sternly.

The secretary grew pale and red by turns. Denial would be useless; no one but himself and his employer had access to the safe; yet he could not answer.

"Speak," thundered Matthewson. "You have stolen them for some purpose of your own. Restore them instantly, or by—"

Sherwin's impulse was to spring upon Matthewson, overpower him, and then escape with the documents. But there were too many difficulties in the way of that.

For a moment he stood irresolute, cowering before the blazing eyes of his superior, and then he withdrew the packet from his bosom, not without a muttered despairing imprecation as he did so.

"Treachery!" cried Matthewson. "What is the meaning of this, Sherwin? Out with the truth, or I will wring it from you. I have already received intimation of your possible unfaithfulness; now I am assured of it indeed."

Sherwin was in all respects, save physically, the weaker man. His first belligerent impulse faded, and then he wilted in the presence of the angered Matthewson like a torn weed in an August sun.

"Make a clean breast of it," commanded his employer. "Not a word craving my leniency until I have heard all."

Thus sternly commanded, Sherwin began:

"It is a plot of Marbury's; he wanted me to take the papers and bring them to him."

"The villain! What use has he for them?"

"He intends to marry the lady, sir,—Mrs. Rowland, and of course—"

"Of course he wants the proofs of her right to the estate. Egad! a pretty plot, indeed! I did not think Marbury capable of quite such a daring game. He has found the lady, then, I take it?"

"Yes, sir," trembled Sherwin.

"And told a cool lie to me about the matter. I see through it all. Sherwin, I trusted you; why didn't you trust *me*?"

The reproach was not intended to be affecting, but only suggestive of the reward Matthewson would have given to obtain an earlier knowledge of Jay Marbury's double-dealing.

"I—I thought the game was about all in Marbury's hands—he had the lady, sir," faltered the secretary.

"And you chose the winning side, as you supposed it to be. It would have been better for you to have stayed with me. You're a fool, Sherwin, and shall suffer for being one. But about Mrs. Rowland now—where is she?"

"In Philadelphia, sir."

"Of course; the street and number," said Matthewson, impatiently.

They were given, and taken down.

"And now, Sherwin, I intend to make it hot for Jay Marbury. I am going to Philadelphia immediately. Will you go with me—or shall I—"

He paused and looked some terrible meaning, for the face of the secretary grew even whiter, and his ashen lips implored—

"Spare me! spare me! I will go with you, and stake my life on the correctness of the information I have given you as to the street and number—do you doubt me there?"

"No; prepare yourself for the trip. I will take my son with me to Philadelphia, and you will soon see the ambitious scheme of Jay Marbury demolished forever. I do not think you will attempt to escape from me, Sherwin—you know me too well for that; but I can't pardon your offence. Henceforth you shall serve me without my confidence. You won't like that. Let us go now; I will see that you send no telegraphic messages to Marbury, apprizing him—"

"I've no thought of that, sir," faltered the craven. "I—I—"

"You are my faithful secretary again, you would say," interrupted Matthewson, contemptuously. Then he remarked mentally—"How well it is that I have never trusted any man with my most important secrets. There's nothing like a reserve of confidence. We're all rascals!—all rascals! big ones and little ones. How I despise the little ones! and those hypocrites who won't admit that they *are* rascals! Ho! for Philadelphia now! Marbury, you're a clever scoundrel, but I intend to crush you."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOILED.

The very hour that Jessie Dale in the power of her revengeful lover was speeding apparently to death, a crisis was also approaching in the fate of her friend, Mrs. Rowland.

Mr. Gray had not intruded upon Mrs. Rowland's society during the days of waiting that followed his interview with her. He had seen her but once, and then only briefly. He had again assured her that no harm should come to her, but when she asked to be allowed to give notice to her friends, the Dales, of her safety if not of her whereabouts, he had refused to grant her that favor.

"Wait, wait," he said, "as *I* am waiting, and all will be well."

And she could but trust him.

One afternoon he came to her very much excited.

"Belmont Matthewson and his son are here," he said, "and he declares that you shall wed Kimball this very hour. He has discovered that Jay Marbury attempted to bribe his secretary to procure those important papers, and fearing that he may lose his hold upon you, has determined to force you into an immediate union with his son."

Mrs. Rowland grew sick with fear as she heard these startling tidings.

"Courage," spoke Mr. Gray; "I am yet able to protect you. But I want you to play a part—a part necessary to the complete overthrow of these villains. Let me explain. You are to be united to this worthless young man—who is nothing but a tool in his father's hands—*not* as Beatrice Rowland, but as the daughter of Janette Ashley Day, and proofs of your being that individual are to be offered on the occasion. Belmont Matthewson does this that hereafter you may be put forward as the true heir of the deceased Mrs. Day's vast property. That you *are* her daughter I do not doubt. A respectable clergyman has been summoned to perform the ceremony; respectable, I mean so far as he is known. *But he is bought;* ministers of the gospel can be bribed as well as other people. It is expected that you will resist the attempted outrage, but the farce would be gone through with, and would stand recorded as a reality. Such is their plan, but I intend to balk them. Do you trust me, Mrs. Rowland?"

His voice quivered with emotion, and he seemed to be under the influence of a powerful inward excitement that he struggled hardly with success to control.

"I must trust you—I do trust you," she answered, grateful, but trembling. "But what if you should prove unable to cope with them?"

A peculiar smile was perceptible under his gray bushy brows. "I am prepared to make their discomfiture a certainty," he said. "So you will do all that they require you to, with the assurance that a timely interruption will save you from the fate they have marked out for you."

"How did Belmont Matthewson discover that I was here?" asked the lady. "Did Jay Marbury inform him?"

"Not he; he gave his chief to understand that your whereabouts was known, but that he had not yet succeeded in obtaining possession of your person. *I* gave Belmont Matthewson the information. I revealed to him Marbury's treachery, and suggested that it would be best to have this proposed marriage ceremony performed in this city. All with an object, as you will soon discover, Mrs. Rowland."

"I trust you wholly," she said, with grateful fervor.

"And now," he continued, "you must show yourself to Belmont Matthewson, or he may suspect that I too am treacherous. Meet him quietly; tacitly assent to all he proposes; be brave, and your trials will soon be ended."

She was conducted to the parlor below, and there she once more beheld the dreaded Belmont Matthewson and his despised and loathly son.

The latter was simply an object of disgust. A cancerous eruption disfigured his features, and his unintellectual countenance wore no expression save that of gross and sinful passion. His bearing was unmanly and listless, as if all spirit and life had left him, except that of mere animal vitality.

Yet to this fallen and corrupted being this fair lady was to be bound!

She shuddered with irrepressible disgust as she forced herself to take the clammy hand he extended her.

Belmont Matthewson said but little. He was satisfied to conduct himself as if nothing had happened and as if nothing was about to happen.

In an hour from the time of his arrival at the house, every arrangement had been completed for the infamous ceremony, and the little party assembled in the parlor.

Pale, faltering, and almost fearing that the dreadful mockery would be permitted to go too far, poor Mrs. Rowland stood up to await the issue of events. Her only support was the presence of her mysterious friend, Jasper Gray, who watched her with encouraging eyes, and had whispered in her ear a final word of reassurance.

The solemn farce proceeded.

"Do you take this woman to be your wife?" asked the unworthy minister of the church.

"I do," replied Kimball Matthewson, with his lack-lustre eyes fixed not upon his expected bride, but drawn, it seemed, by magnetic influence to the fierce watching face of Jasper Gray.

"And whom do you wed?" continued the hireling.

"Beatrice, daughter of Janette Ashley Day, deceased, late of Alabama."

"And such you know her to be?"

"I do."

"And by sufficient proof?"

"By sufficient proof," he repeated.

Turning to Mrs. Rowland, the minister asked—

"Do you take this man to be your husband?"

"Stay!" cried the hot voice of Jasper Gray. "I object to further proceedings."

"On what grounds?" demanded the astounded father of the groom expectant.

"On the ground, first, that this is a most foul and iniquitous proceeding, to which this lady pleadingly objects."

"Silence," cried Belmont Matthewson in a rage, and with a sudden fear of treachery. "Let the ceremony be concluded."

"I object on further grounds," persisted Jasper Gray. "The husband of this lady is still living."

Mrs. Rowland started at these words as if a shock from a galvanic battery had been administered to her.

"Traitor! it is false!" cried Belmont Matthewson.

"It is not false. Behold! I am he!"

The heavy disguising beard, the false eyebrows and the gray wig were torn off. And there in his avenging aspect, stood the lost husband of Beatrice Rowland.

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed in a swooning joy, and fell to the floor.

A panic seized the conspirators. They felt that this was not all.

Nor was it.

The front door of the house suddenly opened to admit a party of arrest.

Belmont Matthewson heard the tread of coming feet, and knew what it foreboded.

"You vile traitor!" he cried, drawing a weapon and levelling it at Winter Rowland; "you have betrayed us all. Die!" He discharged the pistol, but in his blind, hurrying fury he missed his aim, and the ball entered the brain of his own son.

Armed men rushed into the room.

"I will not be taken alive!" cried the maddened villain, drawing a second pistol. "Winter Rowland knows enough to hang me, and I'll die here."

He endeavored to single out Mr. Rowland for his victim. But a crashing blow was delivered upon his head by one of the officers who had entered the room, and with a groan he sank to the floor, while from his lips rushed a red tide that came not from the wound he had received, but from a blood-vessel that he in his mad excitement had ruptured.

We pass over the scene of confusion that followed.

Winter Rowland bore his rescued wife from the apartment, giving his whole care to her, knowing that the officers would attend to all else.

Leaving affairs in this situation, we return to learn the fate of Jessie Dale.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CRISIS.

What horrors were crowded into those awful moments in which Jessie awaited, as she supposed, the death-crash of the opposing engines!

Was there no escape? no averting the doom that seemed so near? She closed her eyes and prayed—prayed as they only can who feel that their fate is sealed; that death is to strike them in a few brief seconds.

She heard the false Wilmer Dorrance cry—"It is coming!" She opened her eyes, and saw him leaning out as if to welcome the doom he had sought for himself and her.

A last cry burst from his lips. He turned to her with a wild, triumphant look, and pointing to the coming engine, leaped to his death.

Jessie closed her eyes again—for the last time on earth she thought. She heard a fierce, hailing shout, a louder roar of wheels, but no collision, no crash of meeting engines. The opposing locomotive—for it was that and its tender alone, and not a train—*was on the other track*, as Cecil Parnell, in the delirium of his joy at his supposed accomplished revenge, had not perceived.

Jessie again opened her eyes, and started to her feet. She hardly knew how she had escaped as yet; but she felt that in some miraculous way she had been saved. The danger was not yet over, for the engine that carried her was still moving with fearful swiftness, and there might be other perils ahead. Oh, if she could only stop the great, fiery creature that was bearing her away! Like an inspiration came the thought, "To start the engine I saw this pulled out," taking hold of the starting-bar—"and therefore the way to stop it must be to push it in." She suited the action to the word.

The speed of the locomotive soon began to slacken. Jessie looked longingly at the brake, too heavy for her little hand to move, but drew a gasping breath of relief as she saw that probably the engine would stop ere long without the use of that appliance. And so it did. Excited men leaped on board, to find the heroic girl lying there in a dead swoon, all her consciousness gone in the reaction that followed the knowledge that she was saved. She did not revive until an hour after, and then was in no condition to give an explanation of her fearful adventure, nor to hear how it was that she had been saved from death. She was tenderly cared for, and conveyed to her home, where for weeks she lay dangerously ill with an affection of the brain, brought on by the trying excitement of that afternoon's adventure.

When she was herself again, she learned that it was the telegraph that had enabled those in charge of the express train to get it on to the other track. A message had been instantly sent to the station below, stating what danger menaced the express, and directing it to shift at once to the right-hand track, which at that point could fortunately be done. Another message followed, ordering the engineer of the express train to detach his locomotive and hasten up the road, halt, alight and open a switch, which would throw the runaway engine on to a side track connecting with a branch road, where no other trains would be met. The switch could not be reached in time for this, but the explanation of the passage of the second engine without a collision is given.

The dead body of Cecil Parnell was found lying where he had made that wild leap. He had been hurled against a strong fence, and it seemed as if every bone in his body had been broken. Before he was interred, great efforts were made to discover who and what he really was, but excepting the information Stowell Dale gave, nothing was revealed.

Jessie, after she recovered from her illness, was made acquainted with all these facts. And she learned others more pleasing, though not less exciting. To ascertain what they were we will retrogress to the period immediately succeeding the balking of Belmont Matthewson's villainous plans.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCLUSION.

Kimball Matthewson was dead; Belmont Matthewson was dying. That frightful hemorrhage could not be stopped in time to save his life, but he lingered for days ere he departed to the land of shadows. His health, though he would not admit it, even to himself, had been failing before, and it was not the blow alone that he had received that caused his death, but the sudden unnerving of his system, long wrought up to an intense strain. For Belmont Matthewson had labored and planned and plotted as few men are capable of doing. His wicked ambition to possess himself of millions, caring not by what unholy means he obtained them, filled and fevered his whole being. He had his eye on two objects—the plundering of an opulent railroad corporation by obtaining the control of the management, and the acquisition of an immense private estate, which he was to secure by the marriage of his imbecile son with the heiress thereof. But now he was dying. Earth was slipping from his grasp, and he had no hold on Heaven.

Pitiable and appalling condition!

He endeavored in his last hours to make some atonement for his many sins. Acknowledgment of Beatrice Rowland's real parentage had already been made in the presence of witnesses. He surrendered, as indeed he could not avoid doing, the valuable evidences of this, and of her right to the fortune in question. He solemnly confessed that he had abducted her from her parents while she was an infant, in revenge for an injury done him by her father—an injury, however, which he admitted was deserved. Later, Mr. Day, the father of Beatrice, died, and his widow, through him, inherited a claim to a large estate, which after long litigation she succeeded in making good. Then it was that Belmont Matthewson, learning this, conceived the idea—Mrs. Day dying soon after her triumph in the courts—of obtaining practical control of the estate. He knew how to manage such an enterprise, and if he had not been defeated by Winter Rowland he would probably have succeeded. This much Belmont Matthewson had confessed, when he chanced to hear the name of Stowell Dale mentioned by one at his bedside.

"Dale! Dale!" he exclaimed, in strange and sudden interest. "The name is not a common one. It was *her* name before she married."

"Whose name?" questioned Winter Rowland, for he was in the room, having remained to hear Matthewson's confession.

"The name of the wife of Elmer Day, mother of Beatrice. She had a Brother Stowell and a Sister Mary."

Winter Rowland was deeply interested. His beloved wife was even at that moment with the Dales, whom she had at once apprized of her rescue and whereabouts, and of the blissful fact that her lost husband was found.

They had sent for her to come immediately to their house, which she did, glad to escape from the scene of the late tragedy. But when she arrived at Mr. Dale's, it was to find the conductor and his sister greatly distressed on account of Jessie, who had just been conveyed home after her thrilling escape from death on the rail.

Aunt Mary was almost beside herself with excitement. Her life was getting to be such a muddle that she feared she would never find peace again; the alarming events of the past few weeks appeared not to have yet reached their culmination.

But Beatrice Rowland was joyfully welcomed to their roof, and became, as soon as her own condition would permit, the attendant of Jessie.

When Winter Rowland heard the dying Belmont Matthewson declare that the mother of Beatrice was a Dale, he sent at once for Stowell, with a curious feeling that now something new was to be revealed.

The conductor, engaged as he was, managed to respond in person to Mr. Rowland's request.

"Belmont Matthewson," said the latter, after some preface, "declares that the late Mrs. Day was a Dale, and that she had a brother and sister bearing the names of yourself and *your sister*, respectively. Can this be only a curious coincidence?"

Mr. Dale seemed agitated, but said in reply and in a tone that reached the ears of the dying man—

"It can be nothing more. I had a sister Janette, but she died long ago."

"She did *not* die," declared Belmont Matthewson with vehemence.

"She did, and it was well she did," said Stowell Dale, solemnly. "Poor Janette! She fell from her purity."

"Janette Dale was a wronged but not a guilty woman," declared the dying man.

"What do you know of my poor dead sister?" demanded Stowell Dale almost fiercely.

"I know much of her, and *something* of your daughter, sir."

Mr. Dale's face took a strange pallor.

"Speak first of her," he cried; "of my daughter. Oh, *tell* me—assure me that she whom I call such, *is* such, for I believe she is, yet I do not *know* it."

Belmont Matthewson again proceeded.

"Years ago a woman came as a servant into my family, bringing with her a beautiful infant which I suspected was not her own, and which she subsequently acknowledged she had stolen from one bearing your name, and—"

"It was my child—my Jessie," interrupted Mr. Dale. "Speak on; tell me her story while yet you have strength. Oh, I must know now."

"You shall know. The child had marked upon her clothing the name—'Jessie Dale.' I changed it to Day, intending to keep the little one as a companion for the infant I had abducted."

"And she was lost afterward? On the occasion of a dreadful railroad accident?" questioned Mr. Dale, eagerly.

"So I believed."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Stowell Dale, "that I know beyond all doubt that my daughter was restored to me. Oh, I believed it; but what joy to know it surely!"

"And your daughter and the wife of Winter Rowland are cousins," continued Matthewson.

"Impossible," said Mr. Dale. "Poor Janette died many years ago."

"She did not," persisted the other.

"I saw her buried."

"Yes; but you did not see her *exhumed*. It was not death, but its simulation that was upon her."

"You wander, I fear."

"My brain is as clear as ever it was. She was buried in the old cemetery at Gaston, was she not?"

"She was."

"Let that grave be opened; it will be found to contain not a vestige of human remains."

"This is a startling story, Belmont Matthewson."

"It is, but a true one. Examine the papers I leave you; all will be plain to you then. Your sister, knowing that her family regarded her as disgraced and lost, wished to be dead to them. A former friend of mine was her lover, and for reasons sufficient to him, helped her to carry out the deception. I have no further strength to speak."

"Poor Janette!" murmured Stowell Dale, deeply moved, yet hardly realizing that he was not in the mazes of some wild dream.

Belmont Matthewson was evidently near his end.

"Have you no revelations to make in regard to the designs of the junto of which you were a member?" asked Mr. Dale after an interval of silence.

"None at all," he said in a tone low but firm. "I will not even betray those who have betrayed me. But I will tell you that my death at this period will cause the total failure of the conspiracy in which we were engaged. I was the leader in that wickedness, and with my fall the plot dissolves. Ellis Lester need not fear for his life now. It was I who set traps of death for him, because he stood like a lion in my way. But he escaped—I have wrought my own ruin, but not his. God have mercy on me, if mercy there can be for such as I. You, Mr. Rowland, I have wronged most, for I sought to make it appear to you that your faithful wife was false to you—I sought to have you slain by an assassin's blade. But you have proved her truth and turned the tables against me. Once more I ask you to forgive me."

"I do," said Winter Rowland, solemnly; "but God's favor is at this moment more to you than mine."

The death-rattle sounded in the throat of the wretched man, and soon all was over.

Leaving the corpse to be attended to by others, Stowell Dale and his companion left the scene of death.

In the presence of his wife and her friends, Mr. Rowland that evening told the full story of his separation from her—the cause of it—his after-doubts—his unhappiness—and his finally successful efforts to assure himself of her innocence and faith, as well as to obtain the facts of her birth—for he had early learned of a mystery there.

He had at first, under Belmont Matthewson's cunning misrepresentations, believed her wholly unworthy. Then came suspicions that both had been wronged and made to think each other false.

His attempted assassination, when he returned to ascertain the facts in this relation, startled him into the conviction that it was desirable for some powerful reason to have him removed. Resolved to assure himself of the whole truth of the matter, he managed in disguise to work himself into the favor of the chief of the secret junto, and then watched and waited until he discovered all.

Belmont Matthewson believed him dead, and thus his work was rendered easier.

He tested, as we know, his wife's faith, and found her nobly true. He learned the facts of her parentage, but desired to obtain the proofs ere he revealed himself to her.

He kept watch over her while she was a prisoner, ready at any moment to save her from danger, but patiently waiting until all he sought was gained.

When the recital was ended, he once more put the question—

"Can you forgive me, Beatrice, for the dreadful doubts I held toward you? How *could* I think you untrue!"

And the trustful, loving look she gave him was sufficient answer.

We have little more to add.

Jessie recovered and learned to her joy of the presence of Mrs. Rowland, and the strange but happy fact that the lady was of near kin to her.

"Belmont Matthewson deceived me in many ways," said Mrs. Rowland. "Why he represented that the infant called Jessie Day—yourself, dear Jessie—was my sister, I do not know. But I believed him—the resemblance a picture of her bore to me seemed irresistibly to confirm it. But that is explained now. There *is* a tie of blood between us, and a tie of love still stronger."

The warm white arms of Jessie were around her neck.

"My more than sister," whispered Jessie. "Oh, how happy I am—you and Harry given me, when—when *I was happy* before."

She smiled archly, and Harry, who was by, pouted of course.

As for Stowell Dale, only Heaven knows how deep and holy was the gratitude his heart contained as he looked upon his child, with no secret sickening doubt longer that she was such. A tender glory of content shone in his face, revealing in a measure his perfect joy.

All that Belmont Matthewson had stated was found to be true. Janette Dale had indeed lived years after her supposed death, had gone to the South and become the wife of a man of wealth and high position. She was embittered against her relatives, and so in her after-prosperity and happiness had not revealed herself to them. Her early story was a sad and painful one, and after the necessary facts were proven, but little was ever said of her. The errors of her youth were forgotten, and gentle silence maintained respecting her, save when the later and brighter events of her life were mentioned.

Winter Rowland and his lovely wife established themselves in his Virginia home, where they still live in the enjoyment of a happiness whose perfection more than makes amends for their past trials. With their immense wealth they do a continual work of private and public benevolence.

Jessie and Harry were married just one year after their first meeting. They live in a princely home, but find their best happiness, not in luxury, show and splendor, but in the pure and simple love they bear each other.

Lucy, the quadroon, and her mute husband are servants in the household of Mr. and Mrs. Rowland.

Manton Edwards and Lizzie Allen are married, and Hetty Gandy isn't. Jack Clayton has been in jail this many a month, and therefore couldn't well keep his promise even if he had intended to.

Jay Marbury was never heard of after his departure from Philadelphia, but is probably engaged in some new villainy elsewhere, sooner or later to reap its consequences.

Conductor Dale and his sister still live in Philadelphia, though their home now lacks Jessie's bright presence, save when she flits in from her own home, as she often does.

Her father, after her marriage, was prevailed upon to give up his position on the road—though he still loves the rail, and can hardly content himself at times away from it. But his new happiness keeps down the old troubling spirit of unrest.

Jessie is a sort of railroad enthusiast, as she may well be pardoned for being, since her young life has been so full of excitement associated with the rail; but she never hears the whistle of a locomotive without an involuntary shudder, as she is reminded of that dreadful ride that came so near being her last. But that was an incident apart from common experience. She has no prejudice against the railway system, but surveys its development with admiration, even if temporary checks do come.

As for the great Pennsylvania Company itself, long may it prosper. Long *will* it prosper if able and honest men retain its management. And that the triumph of villainy, however powerful and well-planned, is not always certain, we think our story has shown.

Conductor Dale has no fear of new plots against the great corporation—of none at least that promise success; and in conclusion we will say that he laughed at the great panic, so far as it related to the Pennsylvania, and bought stock at the falling prices when even stout hearts stood aghast.

THE END.

[We shall begin shortly a new serial story by Burr Thornbury, entitled "HARD TIMES; OR, THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC. A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873-4."]

KITTY'S AMBITION.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

By the great unwieldy gate that led into a garden made glorious by little else than cabbage-heads, blood-red beets, and sweet-smelling herbs, stood Kitty May, with her two dimpled elbows resting on the railing, and her soft-brown eyes looking far away to the purple hills that crowned the distance—yet seeing nothing.

Across the fence, so close to where she stood, that Kitty might have dropped her pretty, slender hand on his shoulder, leaned John Trevor, a tall, straight, handsome young fellow, brown and brawny as a Hercules.

He was looking straight into Kitty's face, and talking very fast.

"You must have known, this long while, what I was thinking about, Kitty dear," he said, in a voice that shook a little, in spite of himself. "But I couldn't speak until I had a home to which I could take you. That time has come. I paid the last dollar on the farm last night, and now it is mine, all mine—and yours, my darling, if you will only say the word, and come to be its mistress."

Words and tone must have thrilled Kitty through and through, for she trembled, and the pretty pink flush quite died out of her cheeks; but she turned away.

"Don't, don't," she murmured, piteously.

"You are not angry?"

"No, John. But—it pains me to hear you talk like that. I—I am so sorry. But, forgive me, I don't think I could ever be your wife."

The young man started, and even his lips grew white. He had been so sure of her love—so sure it would be his blessed privilege to make the sum of her earthly happiness, that this disappointment came like a shock.

"Why, Kitty," he faltered, "I never dreamed but that you cared for me, and would be as happy, when I was able to claim you, as I should be."

"I know," she said, with a sob in her voice. "But I never meant to deceive you, John. Indeed, I may not have read my own heart until to-night. I am very wicked and ungrateful—you ought to despise me, and I'm sure you will, only, dear John, don't quite hate me, please, for what I have made you suffer; I couldn't bear that. I want we should be good, true friends forever and ever. But I shouldn't be happy as your wife."

"Not happy?" he repeated.

He looked surprised, as indeed he was. He could not understand this notion of Kitty's. He was a big, strong, healthy fellow, with a will to dare anything for her sake. And he loved her to distraction. How, then, could she help being happy with him?

"No," she said. "I'm sick, heart-sick of this life. I couldn't go on leading it all my days—the same endless round from sunrise till sunset, day after day. I should lose my wits. I must see something of the world, John, the great, busy world beyond these hills that hem us in. And that could never be if I were to marry you."

He stood gazing at her with a dreadful pallor upon his face that told of pain and heart-ache.

"Where would you like to go, Kitty?" he asked, after a pause. "What would you like to do?"

"Oh, John," she cried, her brown eyes lighting up, "above all things else in the world, I should like to be an actress! I should like to be great and famous, and have people clap their hands at me, and shower bouquets and jewels upon me; and I should want to travel from city to city, and be grand and beautiful, and triumphant everywhere."

A faint smile flickered over the young man's lips.

"I never dreamed you had such an ambition, Kitty. But you shall have your own way. Great actresses must study and be trained—they never spring into greatness at one bound. You will need money, and who should help you but me, who love you so? I'll sell the farm—"

"Oh, no, no!" she cried, sobbing outright, for his generosity touched her. "You shall not do that. The dear old farm for which you have worked so hard!"

"I don't value it, now," he said, sadly.

"You must not sell it. I could never take one dollar of your money."

"You will not even let me help you. Oh, Kitty, Kitty!"

"Not in that way, John. Don't look at me so reproachfully. I know I am wrong and foolish in wishing to go away at all. But I'm tired of this starved, barren life I lead here. I couldn't remain cooped up in a farm-house forever, I couldn't!"

John Trevor understood now the great longing and wistfulness he had often seen in her eyes, but could never before rightly interpret.

"My poor darling," said this honest, tender-hearted fellow. "Don't think I blame you. It isn't your fault that you do not love me; or that you are sick of this monotonous life. You never had a pleasant home here, and I've seen it all along. But I thought you would be happier, when I could take you to one of my own where you would be mistress."

"Kitty! Kitty!" called a sharp, rasping voice, and a gaunt figure appeared at that moment in the low doorway of the farm-house, and stood peering down the path.

"I must go," said the girl. "Grandmother is calling me."

"Good-bye, Kitty." John leaned closer to her, and took her two fluttering hands in both his own, and softly kissed her cheek. "Good-bye. God bless you."

Then he slowly swung on his heel, and was gone.

Kitty looked after him a moment, and then hastened up the path toward the house, feeling very sick and miserable, and wondering why she was not happier now it was all over, and John understood her ambitious plans for the future.

"He is the only person who ever really loved me," she thought. "It was hard to put him away—harder than I would have believed," and tears stood in her pretty brown eyes.

"Oh, Kitty, where have you been idling now?" was Mrs. Graham's greeting, in a vexed tone of voice. "There's the ironing to be done, and the peas shelled for dinner, and the milk to be skimmed. I never saw such a good-for-nothing child."

"It's nothing but work, work, work, from morning till night," muttered Kitty, discontentedly.

"Work!" screamed Mrs. Graham, bobbing her grizzled head angrily. "What else were you born into the world for? I'd be ashamed to complain if I were you, Kitty May."

Kitty entered the long kitchen, neat as wax it was, for neatness was the devil that possessed Mrs. Graham, and lifted one of the hot flats from the stove.

"I wish I were dead, and in the grave with my mother," she murmured, unconsciously thinking aloud.

Mrs. Graham caught the words. Her sharp, thin face grew white as chalk, and she sunk into the nearest chair. There was a mystery about Kitty's mother. Seventeen years ago, one wild, wet night, she had come wandering home through the wind and wet, with little Kitty in her arms. Mrs. Graham had received the child. But she drove away the mother—her own daughter. There was a hard place in this woman's heart, and it was like stone during that dreadful time.

"Hush!" she said now, catching her breath sharply, and looking with wide open eyes at Kitty. "Who told you that your mother was dead?"

"Nobody," was the answer. "She must be, or she would not stay away so long. Don't you believe she is dead, grandmother?"

"She might better be dead," was the stern response. "Now go to your work, child."

Kitty obeyed—she was not inclined to be rebellious very often. But her thoughts would run upon her mother and John, and tears blurred her brown eyes almost continuously.

At last, just as she was putting the ironing-board away, a quick step crushed the gravel of the path outside, and somebody tossed in a folded paper through the open door.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Graham, for Kitty had picked the paper up.

A sudden flush kindled in the girl's cheeks, and her eyes began to sparkle.

"Oh, grandmother!" she cried out, "there's going to be a real play in the village to-morrow night—'The Lady of Lyons.' How beautiful it must be. I've longed all my life to see a play, and now if I could only—"

She stopped short. Mrs. Graham had turned such a ghastly face upon her, that she was fairly startled.

"A play!" she hissed. "I wish the earth would swallow the whole villainous crowd. Give me that bill, Kitty. Now don't you ever let me hear that word from your lips again."

She thrust the programme into the fire, and stalked away somewhat unsteadily.

But the demon, temptation, had entered Kitty's breast. It was now or never, she felt. Perhaps this troupe would take her along with them, and teach her their art. It must be so pleasant, travelling from place to place—the wild, bustling life she had often dreamed about! At any rate, she must see the play, and learn a little better what it was like.

She worked very hard all the next day. But when everything was done, and Mrs. Graham had scolded her full, Kitty crept up into her attic chamber, and donned the blue-sprigged muslin that was her best.

She had a little money, and taking that, and a few trinkets, she watched her chance, and slipped down-stairs, and out of the front door, while her grandmother still lingered in the kitchen.

"The Lady of Lyons" was to be played in a large, empty barn, at the outskirts of the village. Kitty crept in, when the crowd about the door was thickest, and took her seat as near to the extemporized stage as she could get.

The barn filled rapidly, and, by and by, the curtain rose, and the play began.

To Kitty, it was all like a bright, beautiful, wonderful dream—the ladies with their silks and laces, their soft, refined voices and sparkling faces; the handsome men, dressed up like kings and princes, only a deal finer, as it seemed to her; the coarse glare of the foot lights; the sheen of glass jewels and the lustre of cotton velvet—real diamonds and silk velvet they seemed to Kitty—all made up a picture that quite dazzled and bewildered her.

One lady—the Pauline of the play—Madame Vane was the name on the programme—our foolish little heroine watched with feverish eagerness. She was a very pretty lady, with a pale, sad face, but Kitty flushed and thrilled at every word she spoke, at every flash of her glorious eyes.

The third act was nearly ended, when Madame Vane, glancing eagerly along the sea of faces that composed the audience, found Kitty's brown orbs turned upon her with something akin to worship in their clear depths.

Whatever she may have seen in that countenance, Madame Vane grew as pale as ashes. She faltered through the remainder of her role, and when the curtain went down, at the close of the act, a lad pushed his way through the crowd, and touched Kitty's shoulder.

"You're wanted," said he.

She rose with a start. Had her grandmother missed her, and sent this boy to bring her back? No matter. She would never return to the hateful old farm-house again.

"You're wanted," repeated the lad. "Madame Vane sent me to fetch you."

"Madame Vane!"

The pretty lady wished to see her, then? The hot blood mounted to Kitty's cheeks. She felt so glad, so happy. She could scarcely wait to be led to her.

A moment later, Kitty found herself in a very rough-looking withdrawal room, partitioned off from one end of the stage by a few old blankets. Madame Vane sat upon a box, over which a quilt had been thrown. She was white and trembling.

"I'm glad you sent for me, dear madame," cried Kitty, suddenly grown bold; and she knelt lovingly at Madame Vane's feet. "I should have come to you of my own accord, when the play was over."

"Why would you have come, my child?" questioned the woman, faintly.

"Because I am longing to be an actress, too, and because—because—you looked so kind, so good, I was sure you would help me."

Madame Vane started, and a faint color flushed her pale cheeks.

"Poor child," she said. "Do not be dazzled by all this tinsel and false show. It is not an easy life—it might be a fatal one for you."

"I am not afraid," said Kitty, boldly.

There was a moment's silence. How earnestly Madame Vane was looking at her! How she trembled! What could it all mean?

"My dear," said madame, presently, "I am interested in you already. Will you not tell me your name?"

"Kitty May!"

There was a little cry, a gasp, and the next instant Madame Vane had folded her in her arms, and was covering her face with kisses and tears.

Before the girl had recovered from her surprise at this unexpected embrace, the call-boy was shouting for Pauline. The curtain was up again.

Madame Vane rose hastily, and brushed the tears from her eyes. "Stay here, Kitty," she whispered, "I must see you again."

She went away, and Kitty sat very still where she had left her, faint, curious, pleased yet frightened, and all in a tumult of excitement.

Presently there was a dull, crashing sound, followed instantly by a shriek, and the loud roar of many voices. Kitty started impulsively to her feet. Then came an instant of awful suspense, and by and by the rough curtains were thrust aside, and two men bore in Madame Vane, crushed, bleeding, almost senseless.

With a wild moan, Kitty rushed toward her.

"Hush," said one of the men. "A beam fell, and struck her. I think she has fainted."

He was wrong. After a moment or two, Madame Vane put out one of her poor, bruised hands and drew Kitty toward her.

"My darling," she whispered, "I have something to say to you. But send for your grandmother, first. Send somebody who is sure to fetch her."

Kitty went away, very much puzzled. She soon found a man she knew, who volunteered to bring Mrs. Graham without loss of time.

The doctor came, and anxious faces hung about Madame Vane. Kitty found herself thrust unceremoniously to one side. But she remained very quiet until Mrs. Graham made her appearance.

Kitty had not believed she would come; but there she was, pale, grim and stern, but with an unusual tremor about her lips and in her nerveless fingers.

"What's all this?" she said, sharply. "And how dared you run away, when—"

"Hush!" said Kitty, softly. "The poor lady may be dying. Let us go to her at once."

"Dying?" gasped Mrs. Graham.

The hardness went out of her face, as if by magic. There was a softened expression upon it, as she bent over the sufferer, the next instant, with Kitty clinging to her hand.

She took a good look at that sweet, sad countenance, and then a cry broke from her lips.

"Hannah! Oh, my daughter!"

"Mother!"

And the two were clasped in each other's arms.

At last Madame Vane looked up into Kitty's wondering face.

"You see how it is," she said. This woman is my mother. And you—you are my daughter!"

Something within Kitty's heart had told her this already. She flung herself down beside the sufferer, and her tears fell fast.

"Oh, why have you kept away from me all these years?" she moaned.

"It was my fault," said Mrs. Graham. "Like a fool, I drove her from my door, because she had married an actor, and gone upon the stage. I would not let her come nigh you, and she dared not keep you with herself. I've been very hard, very cruel and selfish. And if she dies, her blood will be upon my head."

But Madame Vane did not die. She left the profession for good, and Mrs. Graham and Kitty nursed her back to health and strength.

Mrs. Graham was a changed woman from that night. No more scoldings, no more harsh words, but gentleness, forbearance and peace.

Kitty listened to the story of her mother's privations and sufferings in the stern, gypsy life she had led, and the ambition to be an actress died out of her heart. The quiet, country life she knew, even grew sweet to her, it was so full of peace, and when John Trevor asked her a second time to be his wife, she did not say him nay.

This was her mission, and she knew it now, for she loved him fondly, after all, and love is what makes life precious and sweet.

TOM MOORE'S COTTAGE.

[The following letter, recently addressed by the editor of THE POST to the "*All-Day City Item*," may prove interesting to our readers, as showing the grounds upon which the name of the poet Moore is connected with the cottage in Fairmount Park.]

MR. EDITOR—The critic of the *Sunday Dispatch*, in a recent notice of the poem of "Faire Mount," says:—

"It is illustrated with views of Belmont, the 'Hills,' and of the mythical building called 'Tom Moore's Cottage,' concerning which Mr. Peterson adopts the legend upon the subject, and says of Moore:

'A wanderer, on Schuylkill's banks he roved,
Far from the friends and scenes he dearly loved,
Till his full soul forgot its wish to roam,
And rested here as in a dream of home.
Still stands the cottage, tottering now and bent,
Where once the poet sang in sweet content,
And thought if peace e'er dwelt in earthly sphere,
The humble heart might hope to find it here.'

"All this is very pretty; but it is not true. If Mr. Peterson had referred to Tom Moore's published letters he would have found that his whole stay in Philadelphia was not more than a week. The story, therefore, that he was a resident of this cottage, and within its walls composed the song commencing

'Alone by the Schuylkill a wanderer roved,'

has no foundation of fact upon which it can be sustained. Moore could not have been a resident in the cottage, and probably never saw it."

In reply to the Dispatch, I would say that certainly the greater part, if not all of the quotation, is undeniably true. It is not a necessary inference from the lines that the writer is a believer in the tradition that Moore was a "resident" of the cottage referred to. And neither is the fact, if fact it be, that the poet did not remain in Philadelphia longer than a week, a conclusive proof that he did not reside for a short time in the cottage.

In order that the cottage should have an interest derived from its connection with the poet, it is not by any means necessary that he should have been a "resident" of it. If there is reasonable ground for believing that one of the most popular of his ballads was suggested by the cottage in question, that of itself would be sufficient to entitle it to the name of "Moore's Cottage."

Now we know by various passages in Moore's poetry that he had a delightful visit in Philadelphia. For instance, he says:

"And yet, forgive me, oh, you sacred few,
Whom late by Delaware's green banks I knew;
Whom, known and lov'd *through many a social eve*,
'Twas bliss to live with, and 'twas pain to leave!"

And we further know from the same source that much of his time was passed on the banks of the Schuylkill. Witness the following:

"Believe me, Spencer, while I wing'd the hours
Where Schuylkill undulates through banks of flowers;
Though few the days, the happy evenings few,
So warm with heart, so rich with mind they flew,
That my full soul forgot its wish to roam,
And rested there as in a dream of home!
And looks I met, like looks I lov'd before,
And voices, too, which as they trembled o'er
The chord of memory found full many a tone
Of kindness there in concord with their own!
Oh, we had nights of that communion free,
That flush of heart, which I have known with thee
So oft, so warmly; nights of mirth and mind,
Of whims that taught, and follies that refined!"

And again from another poem:

"Alone by the Schuylkill a wanderer roved,
And bright were its flowery banks to his eye;
But far, very far were the friends that he loved,
And he gazed on its flowery banks with a sigh!"

Take now, in connection with the above, the ballad we have alluded to—

"I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled
Above the green elms, that a cottage was near,
And I said, 'If there's peace to be found in the world,
A heart that was humble might hope for it here.

"It was noon, and on flowers that languished around
In silence reposed the voluptuous bee;
Every leaf was at rest, and I heard not a sound
But the woodpecker tapping the hollow beech-tree.

"And 'Here in this lone little wood,' I exclaimed,
'With a maid who was lovely to soul and to eye,
Who could blush when I praised her, and weep if I blamed,
How blest could I live, and how calm could I die!'

"By the shade of yon Sumach, whose red berry dips
In the gush of the fountain, how sweet to recline,
And to know that I sighed upon innocent lips,
Which had never been sighed on by any but mine."

Add now to the force of the above quotations the old tradition that connects the poet with the cottage referred to, and judge whether it does not give us a fair right to infer: either that Moore did reside for a short time in this cottage; or, if he did not reside there, that the cottage had struck his fancy as he wandered along the Schuylkill, and that it is the veritable little home he alluded to in the ballad.

In truth, the facts, it seems to me, would warrant a much stronger *poetical* version, for poetry does not pretend to the strict accuracy of history. History must take nothing for granted; poetry may take much for granted, so that it does not fly in the face of sober and undoubted fact. And had I been writing a poem of different character, I should probably have pictured this cottage as the abode of a rustic Hebe, whom the poet met on that solitary ramble of which he writes as follows:

"The stranger is gone—but he will not forget,
When at home he shall talk of the toil he has known,
To tell, with a sigh, what endearments he met,
As he strayed by the waves of the Schuylkill alone."

That he met somebody is evident. That the maid was a resident of this cottage is not improbable. And that she, as well as the cottage, suggested the ballad, may be fairly inferred from its tenor. I should have assumed, therefore, that the beautiful Phebe dwelt here, and that she was one of those of whom the susceptible poet says—

"'Twas bliss to live with, and 'twas pain to leave!"

But I think I have said enough to show that we have ample grounds in Moore's poetry, and in tradition, to connect his name with the Park, and with the cottage in question.

Before concluding, as I am on the subject of criticism, allow me to copy for you a couple of verses suggested by another criticism which I happened to hear:

TWO.

A poet went into the park;
The river and trees and the throng
Of patriot memories there,
All lifted his soul into song.

A donkey went into the park;
His soul and his eyes were of clay;
He saw nothing, felt nothing there,
And he answered the bard with a bray.

I have the honor to be yours, very respectfully,
H. PETERSON.

☞ Perhaps one of the oddest elections on record occurred at the last general election for members of the General Assembly in Germany. A certain district had only one legal voter, who walked proudly up to the polls and voted for himself, the only eligible member in the district. But when his name was announced as the elected member, he pomposily arose and said, "Messrs. Commissioners, I do not accept the election!" and walked gravely off.

☞ The day when a boy begins to feel uneasy at being dependent upon somebody else, is the day when his boyhood begins to give way to manhood. The day when a girl finds somebody on whom she is willing to depend, is that in which she passes from girlhood to womanhood.

☞ In Baltimore lately Charles W. Gross committed suicide by swallowing poison. Deceased had been a clerk, and was charged with embezzlement by his employer. A warrant for the arrest of Gross had been issued.

☞ "UNHOOKED."—A young lady had coquetted until the victim was completely exhausted. He rose to go away. She whispered, as she accompanied him to the door, "I shall be at home next Sunday evening." "So shall I," he replied.

☞ Merritt Wheeler, a man indicted for the murder of a young woman with whom he was intimate, committed suicide in the Auburn, New York, jail on the 1st instant, by cutting his throat with a razor. The previous evening he had confessed to the jailor that he had been guilty of having murdered two men, and tried to kill a third, previous to committing the crime for which he was then awaiting trial. It would be an interesting question as to how such a man was permitted to have a razor in his cell.

☞ A curious story comes across the ocean of a shapeless bundle of rags found recently in a tree-top in the South African colony of Natal. It is said to be one of the missing balloons which floated out of Paris during the siege with a freight of letters and dispatches—orders from the Government of National Defence to its generals in the field, and messages of love and cheer, of sorrow and complaint from the suffering citizens to their friends outside. Natal is about 5000 miles distant from Paris, in a southerly direction.

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AUTUMN RAINS.

BY MIRIAM EARL.

Drip, drip, drip, with a sullen sound,
No summer crystals, bright and glancing,
Over the thankful meadows dancing,
But a wintry storm on a wreck-strewn ground.

No folded cloud that may drift away,
No sudden burst of sunny splendor,
Making the heart grow glad and tender,
Only a leaden and changeless gray.

"Into each life some rain must fall,"
Seemingly sent by a pitiless doom,
Yet no one walketh in constant gloom
With God's sun shining above it all.

Biographical Sketches.

DANIEL BOONE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Daniel Boone, the celebrated pioneer-settler of Kentucky, was a Pennsylvanian by birth. He first saw the light in Bucks county, in February, 1735. His father, Squire Boone, was an Englishman, and the father of eleven children, of whom Daniel was the sixth.

Early in his boyhood the future pioneer's greatest pleasure was to wander through the woods, studying the habits of the wild animals and contemplating those natural, uncultivated beauties of which the inhabitants of cities know so little, and can hardly form an idea. It was not hard to gratify a passion for sylvan life in those days, especially around the game-abounding and forest-encircled spot where the Boones then lived—a settlement near Reading.

The settlers lived in fear of Indian assaults; and while making war on the game and pursuing his woodland studies, young Boone learned things far more valuable than book-knowledge, of which he got little. He learned self-control, self-possession, promptness—for at the moment he deemed himself most secure, lithe, wily red-skins might appear from behind verdant screens and gnarled trunks. Every hour of his woodland life was full of danger. But the danger had glorious compensations.

When Daniel was about eighteen, the Boones removed to North Carolina, and settled in the northwestern part of that State. Here the mighty hunter, having thus far escaped serious hurt from Indian bullets and arrows, was pierced by a sharper dart than any red-skin could send. The archer was Cupid; and the young hunter married Rebecca Bryan, whose eyes, tradition says, were once mistaken by him for the soft, bright eyes of a deer, as they peered at him from the thick foliage.

Boone found North Carolina an uncongenial place of residence. The governors were either Scotch or English; they favored their own countrymen. Extortionate taxes, law-fees, snobbish pretensions and official oppression drove the more independent and simple-living settlers from the place; and when, in 1767, John Finley, a backwoodsman, brought glowing reports of the fertility of Kentucky, which he represented as a happy hunting-ground, Boone drank in his words eagerly. His sons were now old enough to manage the farm, and his wife Rebecca, a thrifty matron, was fully competent to oversee them. Equipped for a long and perilous journey into the wilderness, he and five companions set out on the 1st of May, 1769, "in quest of the country called 'Kentucky,' as he says in his journal. They encamped on the banks of the Red River.

In December, Boone and Stewart, who had gone out to reconnoitre, reached the main stream of the Kentucky. Twilight was falling. The travel-weary explorers had just reached the brow of a small hill, and were thinking of welcome rest, when a number of Indians rushed from the dark shade of a thick cane-brake. Having secured all the supplies of the party, the Indians forced them into the cane-brake.

Boone's knowledge of Indian character now proved of great use to him. With stoical self-control, he manifested neither fear nor uneasiness, and made no attempt to escape. He must have even deceived his wily captors, for they set no watch on their prisoners during the night. They doubtless intended to adopt them to the tribe. Seven days passed. Boone waited, watched and acted his part. The Indians treated him and his companions with rude kindness. To run away after such treatment at their hands, would be regarded as an offence never to be forgiven by the savages; but Boone determined to put it to the test, and gain or lose his all.

On the seventh night of his captivity, Boone lay apparently asleep by the blazing fire. Anxiously he watched until the Indians one by one had dropped asleep. When the watchful eyes of the red-skins no longer gleamed in the firelight, Boone awakened his companion, Stewart, and in a whisper gave his plan. The two secured their guns and a few trifling articles, and made their escape. All night they pursued their stealthy way through the forest and tall canes until they reached the place where the whole party had encamped. But the camp had been plundered. No trace of their associates was ever discovered.

Boone was absent from his family two years, during which time "he tasted neither bread nor salt, nor saw any other human being than his travelling companions and the Indians who had taken him prisoner." At last he returned to North Carolina, sold his farm on the Yadkin river, and persuaded his wife and family to accompany him to Kentucky.

In September, 1773, Daniel and his brother, Squire, began their journey toward the unknown wilderness. At Powell's Valley, through which they passed, five families and forty armed men joined them. This accession increased both their strength and confidence.

The following is a description of their primitive camping arrangements, as given in Peck's life of Boone: "The camping place is near some spring or watercourse; temporary shelters are made by placing poles in a sloping position, with one end resting on the ground, the other elevated on forks. On these, tent cloth, prepared for the purpose, or, as in the case of these pioneers, articles of bed-covering are stretched. The fire is kindled in front against a fallen tree or log, toward which the feet are placed while sleeping. If the ground is wet, twigs or small branches are laid under the beds. Each family reposes under a separate cover, and the clothing worn by day is seldom removed at night. Provided with such accommodations Boone and his family never imagined that they were less happy than while reposing in the cabin they had left on the Yadkin."

While on the route, several young men in charge of the cattle were attacked by Indians. Six were killed; among these was James, the youngest son of Boone. The main body of the pioneers was five miles ahead, but hearing the alarm, returned and drove off the Indians. The emigrants were, however, so greatly disheartened by this calamity that they gave up the expedition.

In 1774, Daniel Boone, at the request of Governor Dunmore, was sent into Kentucky to conduct from thence a party of surveyors; an enterprise which he accomplished with much difficulty.

A company was formed in North Carolina for the purpose of purchasing lands in Kentucky, and Boone was made captain of a corps of well-armed men who were to ascertain the quality and situation of the tract in question. The difficulties and dangers these men encountered in this attempt to penetrate thick cane-brakes and tangled forests can scarcely be understood at the present day. Having lost some of their number in skirmishes with the Indians, they at last reached the Kentucky. On the bank of the river, they erected a stockade fort, which they named Boonesborough. It appears that in settling Kentucky, Boone and his followers took no unfair advantage of the Indians, and, in the words of a biographer of Boone, "if in any part of the United States, the white people had a fair and equitable right of settlement, it was in Kentucky."

Leaving men to guard the fort and prepare the ground for agricultural purposes, Captain Boone went to bring his wife and family to the infant settlement. Mrs. Boone and her daughter were the first white women that ever stood on the banks of the Kentucky.

The Indians entertained great respect for Boone. This was due to his wonderful tact and self-control, as well as to his prowess as a hunter. In 1778, he was made prisoner by the Shawanese, and adopted with singular ceremonies by that tribe. During the Revolution, he was steadfastly loyal to the cause of freedom.

Boone, although a match for any number of red men, was not equal to the legal quibbles of his own race. On account of imperfect entries and flaws in his title, he was deprived of his lands in Kentucky. Reparation for this loss was afterward made him by Congress, in 1814.

Old age could not quench the ardor of this veteran Nimrod. Each year at the return of the hunting season, he manifested a feverish restlessness which nothing but a range in the wilderness could allay. This remarkable and admirable pioneer-backwoodsman, died at the age of eighty-six. After his death scarcely a county in Kentucky failed to pay the honors due to the memory of the founder of that State.

*Kain-tuck-ee, a Shawanese word, signifying "at the head of the river."

WITH OUR APOLOGIES TO MR. TENNYSON.

MAUD (reads).—

"Then that same day there passed into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes, and lightly was her slender nose
Tiptilted like the petal of a flower——

—You're not listening to a word, Lizzie! You can think of nothing but that hideous little wretch of a pug!"

LIZZIE.—"I *am* listening—and it *isn't* a hideous little wretch! It *was* a little duck, it was; and its darling ickle nosey-posey *was* tiptilted like the petal of a flower!"

BIRDIE THORNDYKE.

BY ANNE L. FORCELLE.

"When love is kind," hummed George Halcastle, softly. "Birdie, do you believe in love?"

The girl, who stood just inside the low gate, with her clasped hands resting lightly on his shoulder as he bent over her, laughed a low, contented, childish laugh, which told a tale of quiet happiness.

"Of course I do, George," she said, "that is a foolish question, truly, for I believe in you."

Was it her fancy, or did a cloud pass over the handsome face above her? She thought so at first, but the smile which came in answer to her words made her disbelieve it.

"What a dear little girl it is," he said, pinching her pink cheek softly. "Such a dear little innocent heart—such a precious little soul!"

She looked up at him shyly, a sidewise, bird-like look which made her pet name seem most aptly given.

"Don't laugh at me," she said, "for I mean it every bit," and then, no longer smiling, he bent and kissed her.

"I know you do, little one, I was not making a jest of you or your words, darling, and would not for the world. I must go now, the dew is falling, and your dress is damp already. Good-night."

"So soon!" The sweet face showed her disappointment. "Shall I see you to-morrow?"

"Probably. I'll not promise, so don't be disappointed if I fail. Good-night again."

"Good-night," and he was gone, only pausing at the turn in the road to look back and smile at her again, and Birdie went into the house with a happy heart.

"So Mr. Halcastle has gone," said her father, laying his paper aside with a little sigh of satisfaction, "and we can have a quiet evening together. By the way, Birdie, this sea air is doing wonders for you, you are actually growing rosy. I am glad we came, indeed, and it was lucky our getting this cheap boarding-place out of the way of the fashionables, wasn't it?"

"Yes," answered Birdie. "Everything has come about very happily for us, very happily indeed."

"And you are sure you won't feel the going back very much, Birdie?" he asked, a little anxiously, "after the freedom and the pure air here, are you sure you will not pine for it in the city?"

"Never fear for me, I am not going to do anything of the kind. And, besides, we have two weeks yet before your engagement commences, so we needn't worry," and with a merry laugh, she went to the old melodeon which stood on unsteady legs by the window and opened it.

"I will play for you if you like—music sounds best in the twilight—and you shall lie and listen and go to sleep if you will."

And then, sitting in the darkness, she translated the language of her happy heart into music.

"Two weeks more," she had said, but those two weeks passed all too quickly, and at last, before she fairly realized it, the last night of her stay in Fairsea came.

Nearly every day of that two weeks had brought George Halcastle to the little white house on the "Long Shore Road," sometimes only for a few short minutes—oftener for a longer stay.

Mr. Thorndyke, Birdie's father, was always glad to see the handsome, cordial, cheerful young fellow; and Birdie, she was shy and quiet always, but the welcome in her eyes was enough to satisfy any one, even were he more exacting than George Halcastle.

On this last afternoon there was a shadow in the clear brown eyes, but the red lips smiled all the while, and Birdie seemed very bright and cheerful. So much so that her father, stroking her soft hair, said, with a pleased look on his worn face, "My little Birdie is glad to go back again, after all. The cage is not so gloomy as I thought." But the younger man, seeing the shadow, understood.

Just eight weeks before, he had in a solitary ramble along the shore, descried, far off on a high rock, cut off from land by the advancing tide, a slender, girlish figure, standing erect, and gazing straight out to sea.

"It is over my head already," she had answered in response to his call, and then she turned her face seaward again, and said no more.

Half an hour later Mr. Thorndyke, sitting in the shady porch of his boarding-place, with his newspapers and a glass of lemonade, was horrified and almost paralyzed by the sudden appearance of an excited and very wet young gentleman, hatless and coatless, with a limp little figure in his arms, which, on examination proved to be his daughter Birdie—a veritable Undine in appearance, but, for the time, unconscious of it all.

That was the way the acquaintance commenced, and Birdie, when attired in dry raiment, proved to be such a charming little girl, that George Halcastle could not resist the temptation to call two or three times to inquire if her little adventure had been productive of harmful consequences, and after that of calling without any excuse whatever. For eight weeks this had gone on, and at last the end of the pleasant summer had come, all too soon for little Birdie.

"It must be good-night and good-bye this time," said George Halcastle, as they stood by the gate in the twilight. "It has been a pleasant season here, has it not, little one?"

"Oh, so pleasant!" The sigh which accompanied the words told how much they meant. "I shall see you again?"

"I shall be in New York all winter, and shall certainly find you, if you will let me."

"I shall be so glad." And then, a few minutes later, she stood alone, weeping quietly, for even a short separation where one loves is hard, and Birdie was only a girl—a child almost—and this was her hero.

Back again in the close little lodgings in Amity Place. Birdie's improvement in health and spirits was, for the first week, a source of much happiness to her father, and at the same time she saw with a sinking at heart how thin and pale he was growing, and how the coming winter seemed to chill and depress him before it arrived.

After that first week or two a little shadow came into Birdie's eyes which puzzled her father and troubled him more than he would have confessed. She had of late taken a fancy to sit near the window always, very near, that she might see both sides of the narrow street; she started nervously at any unusual sound, and there was a look in her face as though she were watching for some one.

At last, one day, Mr. Thorndyke coming up the stairs slowly and with the frequent pauses which of late were necessary to him, heard a new voice in the room above, and on reaching the door, George Halcastle rose to greet him. It needed only one glance at Birdie's face to tell the story of the past waiting and watching. And her father, settling down into his great chair with a little sigh, said to himself sadly, "Children grow so fast—so very fast."

After that the handsome face of the young gentleman was seen often at Amity Place; he came frequently, and Mr. Thorndyke, watching the two from his corner, noted his manner curiously.

He seemed very fond of Birdie always; but sometimes there was a constraint in his manner, which was greatly at variance with the lover-like tenderness of other times.

"I must have a talk with him some time," said Mr. Thorndyke. "I can't have this go on if he doesn't mean it—and if he does mean it, I must look him up a little."

But one day George Halcastle left town for a week, and when he again went to Amity Place, Birdie met him with a white, shocked face; and an ugly black dress which told its own sad story.

"He was buried yesterday," she said, "some of the theatre people came and helped about it. And now I am all alone. What shall I do?"

True enough. What could the child do? Ralph Thorndyke, with talents that might have made him famous, had, through sheer lack of energy and application, lived and died a second-rate actor. And with his expensive habits and careless ways, had left not one penny to his only child. And she was utterly alone; for her father had kept her away from the theatre and his associations there, and made himself all in all to her as long as he lived.

"What shall I do?" she asked, looking up at him. "You are my only friend in all the world. Can you tell me?"

And he comforted her as best he could, while he inwardly asked himself the same hard question.

"You need rest more than anything else now," he said; "stay quiet here a week or so and then we will see."

But at the end of the week Birdie had answered the question for herself.

"I have found out what to do," she said, almost in the old joyous way, as he came in one day; "everybody is so kind. I went down to the stationer's and asked if I could get some copying. And he made inquiries, and was as good as good could be. And see." She held up a package of papers. "It doesn't pay very well. But I can get one little room somewhere, and can take care of myself."

And he, willing to have her believe that she was entirely independent, rejoiced with her at her good fortune.

The "one little room" was changed for two pleasant little chambers, and Birdie was soon installed mistress thereof. And very cosey and pleasant did she make them. And although she sorrowed deeply for her father, the days began to seem bright and sunshiny again.

George Halcastle came often—always lazily good-humored and cheerful; and his coming made the darkest days pleasant to her.

"My sister," he called her to the landlady, who, suspicious and grim, had at the first (unknown to Birdie) demurred about receiving her as a lodger, and this relationship was adhered to, although Birdie was not a little shocked at the deception.

"It doesn't seem right," she said, a little anxiously. "Deception of any kind is wicked, you know." But he laughed, and besought her not to "get him into a scrape" by disputing it, and so she let it go.

Sometimes in the pleasant fall evenings (for fall had come again), he would walk with her a little ways through the quietest streets—never in any of the thoroughfares or most frequented places—and she, leaning on his arm, would look up in his face and lose herself in a little maze of wonderment as to why he, of all men, should care for her, for that he did care for her was a settled thing.

And he—he seemed happy, too, but in a fitful way that troubled Birdie a little sometimes; his gayety alternating often with gloomy seasons which she could not understand, but which shadowed him sometimes for days.

"I wish you would tell me what troubles you," she said one evening as he stood tapping idly on the window, waiting for her to make ready for a walk. "I can't bear to see you unhappy."

"Unhappy, little girl?" he laughed, shaking off the shadow, and turning to her, bright and cheerful as ever. "I am the happiest man in the world, or shall be very soon. Don't worry your pretty head over me;" and drawing her hand through his own, they went out together.

It was a pleasant fall evening, just cold enough to make one's pulses tingle, and George Halcastle was in the gayest spirits, laughing and talking merrily as they sauntered along.

"I wonder how many people in this city are as happy as we," he said, laughing down at the sweet face which looked up at him. "I don't believe there is one." And Birdie clung a little closer to his arm by way of answer.

They were near the corner of the street as he said this, and two young gentlemen, walking slowly along arm-in-arm, met them under the gaslight, and to Birdie's surprise they both bowed to her companion as they passed, staring at her rudely.

The look which they both gave her was one of undisguised admiration, but it was a look which made her cheeks flame and the hot tears come to her eyes, for it was not only admiration that she saw in both their faces, but an expression which she had never seen before; and without knowing that she had done anything wrong, she yet felt guilty and ashamed.

"George," she said with a little sob, "I don't want to walk any more—let us go back."

"Did those fellows frighten you?" he said, looking down at her, with a dark cloud settling down over his face. "They looked at you rudely, hang them! But you were not afraid—with me?"

His fierceness frightened her more than all, but she answered earnestly, "No, not afraid—never afraid with you; but let us go back."

That night Birdie promised to marry George Halcastle in two weeks' time.

"It's no use to put it off any longer," he said, "that is, if you love me, Birdie; I shall never feel safe until you belong to me," and Birdie had promised.

Two or three days after, George went away—they were to go on a long, delightful journey after the marriage, and he had some affairs to see to beforehand. So Birdie was left to herself for a few days, and three days before he was coming back a large, handsome, middle-aged lady made her appearance at Birdie's door.

"It's but just last week that I heard Ralph Thorndyke was dead," she said. "Handsome Rafe we used to call him—you know I've been over the sea for two years, and it's a deal of trouble I've had hunting you up—in a hurry too—for I am off for California Thursday. So here you are taking care of yourself and happy as a queen, I dare say. Poor Rafe was that disposition, and I suppose you are like him." And so the cordial, hearty woman rattled on until at last she declared that Birdie must "put on her things" and go to her hotel with her for the remainder of her stay. "I'll have time to visit with you but little, but the change will do you good," she said, and Birdie, remembering her father's mention of Mrs. Martin, did as she was bid.

"I'll take you to a play," said Mrs. Martin the second evening. "It'll be fun to go in a private capacity for once;" and so Birdie went with her new friend.

Mrs. Martin had good reason to be proud of her companion, who with her sweet face and shiny hair was one of the loveliest sights in the whole assemblage, but while Birdie was attracting many admiring glances, she was occupied in gazing around, childishly enjoying the brilliant scene, and sensible of only one thing lacking to complete her enjoyment, and that was the presence of George Halcastle.

"She's confoundedly pretty," said a voice near her. "Arbuckle has got devilish good taste—that's settled. I should like to cut in there myself." There was something in the voice which made her look up, and raising her eyes she met the same bold gaze which had frightened her so, only a few days before; the bold insolence of the stare made her turn crimson, but the words, she thought, could not have referred to her, and so she put them out of her mind, and turned back to the stage, wishing, more than ever, that George were there. "I shall ask him what makes them look at me so," she thought. "I wonder who Arbuckle is, and of whom they were talking?—Mrs. Martin, perhaps," but just then there was a little stir in the box opposite, and she looked over to see the new comers.

A lady, tall, and elegantly attired, was the foremost figure, and she attracted Birdie's notice by a certain haughtiness of carriage, and a frown which seemed to have become a part of her dark beauty, knitting her heavy brows together, and giving a stern, hard look to her face—an unhappy look it seemed to Birdie, and moved by a sudden impulse, she touched her companion's arm.

"Who is she?" she asked, and Mrs. Martin, looking across, answered:

"She? That's Mrs. Arbuckle, the wife of the fastest young fellow in town. He married her for her beauty when he was only a boy, and she is years older, and people say she's the dickens for temper, and he—" here the handsome shoulders were shrugged significantly, and Birdie, with another look at the dark face, turned her attention elsewhere.

"Arbuckle," she said; "then it was of her they spoke," but just then Mrs. Martin spoke again.

"Look there!" she said. "There's Mr. Arbuckle himself; isn't he handsome?"

Birdie lifted her eyes and looked across.

"Very," she said, quietly; "are you sure that is he?"

"Sure?" Mrs. Martin looked at her in indignant surprise. "Everybody knows George Arbuckle in London. I met him there, and knew him as well as I do anybody—and a fast one he is too."

And then Birdie sat back a little in the shadow and said no more.

"How pale you are!" said Mrs. Martin, a little later. "Are you faint? You look ill," but Birdie shook her head.

"Only tired," she answered, and then she sat there, leaning her head on her hand until the play was over.

That night, as Mrs. Martin sat before the fire in her room, Birdie came in with her long dark hair veiling her shoulders, and knelt down beside her.

Something in her white face startled the kind-hearted woman. "What is it, dear?" she asked, laying her hand on the bowed head tenderly. "Can I help you?"

And then Birdie clung to her, shivering and sobbing. "You were my father's friend," she cried; "let me stay with you always. You have been so kind to me—kinder than you know. Will you? I will do anything, only keep me with you always."

The next day George Halcastle turned down the narrow street which led to Birdie's home, but no smiling face was at the window to welcome him, and when he opened the door of the pleasant little sitting-room a sudden chill struck him, for Birdie was not there.

"Birdie," he called, "Birdie—where are you?" but no one replied.

The door of the next room stood ajar, and he pushed it further back—no one was there.

"She will come back directly," he said. "I will wait for her," and going to the little writing-table which stood by the window, he took up a little note which lay there, and which he had for the first time perceived.

"She was called away, and fearing I might come back before her return, left me a welcome," he thought, smiling, "what a loving little girl it is!" and then he opened the folded sheet and read the few words therein, written in a pitiful, trembling hand, so unlike Birdie's.

"I pray God to bless and keep you always," it said, "for the truth has come to me, and I shall never see you again. I can only say—good-bye," and that was all.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

WE cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

"LONE STAR," (Rose Dale,) writes us a long letter, confessing her love for a man with whom she is as yet personally unacquainted, and asking what she shall do to gain his affections in return. She believes him to be in every way worthy and noble, and free to address her as a lover, if he should so choose. The letter of Lone Star is full of feeling, and not at all discreditable to her nature, but she should be very careful how she permits her heart to go forth to another in the manner she describes. As to winning the gentleman's love, we advise her not to attempt that, except by being so womanly, modest and good that, since he moves in the same circle that she does, he can but observe these attractions in her. But let her make sure *he is*, and not merely *seem*, all this, not with a design upon his heart, but with a desire to grow true and beautiful in character. The composition and handwriting of "Lone Star" are fair.

J. E., (Mazonville, Wis.,) wishes to know when the battle of Waterloo was fought. On the 18th of June, 1815.

EMIT. C. GARNER asks: "Where is the U. S. man-of-war 'Colorado' at present?" The vessel at this date (Nov. 18th) is at the Brooklyn navy-yard, undergoing repairs, and would be fit for sea, it is thought, in about twenty days.

R. M. M., (Willow Glen, Pa.,) writes, concerning the story entitled "Cost of Conquest," by Clementine Montagu, published in our columns last spring. We have only to repeat that the real names of the story and author are as we have given them.

ANXIOUS INQUIRER, (Hatfield, Montgomery Co., Pa.,) writes: "I come to you with an inquiry which I hope you will not refuse to answer. I am a sufferer from loss of voice (laryngitis, the doctors call it), and have not been able to get permanent relief from physicians here. I have heard it said that there is a doctor in Philadelphia who treats diseases by magnetism, and has been very successful in cases like mine, paralysis, &c. His name is T. Haseempling. Do you know anything of him, and do you think he could benefit me? Please answer without fail." We would rather correspondents would not apply to us on such subjects. To you we will only say that in personal character and professional ability the physician referred to stands high, and that people whom we know have got well under his treatment. He resides at Sixteenth and Mount Vernon streets.

SEVERAL SUBSCRIBERS, (Townsend,) ask: "What was the vote of Lincoln, Douglas, Breckenridge and Bell in Pennsylvania at the election by which Lincoln was first elected President of the United States? Please give each party's vote separate." The following are the figures:—Lincoln received 268,030 votes; Breckenridge, 178,871; Douglas, 16,765; Bell, 19,776.

R. H. B., (Lake Creek, Ill.,) asks: "1st. Why is it that soldiers who fought in the Mexican war do not all draw pensions as those who fought in the late war? 2d. What two nations went to war about a bucket? 3d. Is it true, as I have heard, that paper is manufactured for the purpose of being used like boards to partition rooms and form ceilings? If so, where, and at what cost?" 1st. Soldiers of the Mexican war, who were disabled so as permanently to unfit them for active life, do receive pensions from the government. 2d. The anecdote is told of two small states in Italy, we believe. 3d. Paper has been so used, but we cannot inform you of the place or cost of manufacture. In connection with this subject, we may say that among the novel and useful fabrics exhibited at Vienna was a kind of paper, very strong and tough, and yet perfectly soft and pliable, like cloth. This is embossed and printed on, and is prepared for the purpose of hangings, curtains, &c., for which it is said to possess remarkable adaptation as compared with what is commonly employed. It is simply applied to the walls, so that it can easily be removed at any time. The material is also described as handsome in appearance, durable, and by no means expensive.

A CONSTANT READER, (Philada.,) writes: "A friend and myself have had a controversy as regards the largest gun ever cast. Will you be kind enough to inform me which of the three following was the largest, and carried the largest ball, viz: The 'Swamp Angel,' which destroyed Charleston at a distance of seven miles, the 'Woolwich Infant,' or the 'Union Gun' cast at Pittsburgh." The "Woolwich Infant" is the largest of the three named, and we believe, the largest piece of ordnance ever cast. Allow us to say to you that Charleston was never destroyed by the "Swamp Angel" at a distance of seven miles, nor at any greater or lesser distance. Projectiles were thrown into the city, but the damage done was not so great as you appear to think.

SINCE the publication of our answer to a correspondent, stating our ignorance of the authorship of the popular children's poem, "Mary had a Little Lamb," we have been informed by one of our contributors (Clio Stanley) that the gifted and distinguished editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, is the author of it. Mrs. Hale was at one time, we believe, engaged in the writing of books for the young, and this famous little poem was composed at that period. Few poems for children are known more widely, and few are more natural and pleasing.

PLOW-BOY, (Louisa, Ky.,) asks: "1st. Is it a fact that the Mississippi river runs up hill, or in other words, that it is upwards of three miles higher at its mouth than it is at its source? I hear it stated that it was surveyed some years ago, and the above was the result; also that the statement was sharply criticised by the savants of the country, among whom was a then professor of Yale College. Now what I really want to know is this: Was there ever such a survey made, and is any, or all, of the foregoing, facts? 2d. Are any of the knitting-machines advertised adapted to family use, especially for the knitting of coarse woollens? 3d. What is meant by the 'car-hook tragedy?' What was Foster charged with in connection with it? 4th. Was a plan of our common-school system exhibited at the Vienna Exposition? Are the common-schools of Saxony in Germany equal, inferior or superior to those of New York or Massachusetts?" 1st. As relates to the level of the sea, the Mississippi does not "run up hill," the descent from its source averaging a fraction over six inches to the mile, making a total of sixteen hundred and eighty feet. But there is another view of the matter to be taken; and on this the statement above referred to, which at first seems preposterous, is founded. As relates to the absolute distance from the centre of the earth, long streams flowing either north or south toward the equator, really have their outlets higher than their sources, owing to the fact that the earth bulges beyond the lines of a true sphere at the equator, and is flattened toward the poles. More than one survey of the Mississippi has been made, but as to the particular one that was so startling in its results to the savants of the country, including the Yale professor, we have no definite knowledge. 2d. The Lamb knitting-machine is highly spoken of; it excels in the particular mentioned. 3d. The "car-hook tragedy" was a brutal murder committed on one of the street railways of New York city. Foster was the man who perpetrated the deed. He struck with a car-hook and fatally injured a passenger, being incited to the inhuman act by some remonstrance offered by the passenger against the insulting conduct of Foster toward a woman on the same car. 4th. Massachusetts, and, we believe, one or two others of the New England States exhibited such a plan at the late exposition at Vienna. The common-schools of Saxony are good, and would compare favorably with any elsewhere. They have their defects no doubt, as has our own common-school system, upon which we do not look with the unqualified approbation many seem willing to extend to it.

S. C. C. (Hancock, N. Y.,) asks: "1st. What was the name of the first theatrical play ever written by William Shakespeare? 2d. Did Thomas Moore die a natural death? 3d. In poetical works is it customary to insert the poems in the order they are written; and are they inserted in this manner in Sir Walter Scott's works? 4th. Where was Alexander the Great buried?" 1st. It is impossible to determine, almost impossible to guess, which of Shakespeare's plays was written first. That he, at the commencement of his literary career, chiefly employed his pen in the revival, alteration and improvement of existing dramas is almost certain; but that he had not ventured upon original composition is highly improbable. A young man so gifted would not and could not wait until he was twenty-five or six before he gave distinct expression to his genius. "Venus and Adonis" was in existence, many critics and commentators assert, before Shakespeare left Stratford for London. "Titus Andronicus," "Love's Labor Lost" and the "Two Gentlemen of Verona" are among his earlier productions, but as to the order of their composition no one can say with certainty. 2d. Yes. 3d. It is the custom, though not invariably so, so to arrange them. The rule is observed in the publication of Scott's chief poems, opening with the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," and closing with "Rokeby." 4th. He died at Babylon, but was buried at Alexandria in Egypt.

MAGGIE, (Laserne, Pa.,) asks: "1st. Can you inform me as to the price of a book, advertised in your paper, entitled 'Undeveloped West, or Five Years in the Territories,' and how I can get one? 2d. Are all letters asking information of you answered?" 1st. The book is sold only by subscription. You will have to purchase it of an agent. Write to the publishers. 2d. All proper questions are answered. But as the questions have to take their turn, our correspondents must have patience. We prefer questions on subjects of general interest.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]

A Community of Women Only.

A Boston letter says:

"The establishment of a woman's community within the limits of the town of Woburn, about twelve miles from Boston, has been begun by the formal raising of the frame of the first building. In this community all the land is to be owned by women; and, so far as the management of the affairs of the village is concerned, women suffrage is to be realized to the extent of the utter political disqualification of the sterner sex. The members of the community are obliged to assent to a constitution which is to govern it, but further than this they are unrestrained; except, however, that they are expected to attend at least once a week upon the unsectarian service to be held. The occupation of the residents in Aurora village will be varied, and industrial schools are provided to fit persons for the different kinds of work to be done, including a domestic school for instruction in home duties. Each homestead is to be accompanied with a garden, and gardening and fruit-raising will be a favorite occupation. Co-operative schemes are also planned. One of these, and that which has been pushed nearer to realization than any other connected with the enterprise, is the establishment of a laundry, where full facilities are to be afforded for doing work on a large scale, and bringing money into this thus far decidedly needy village by competing with the famous Troy laundries. About 1000 persons are committed to the enterprise, though they are not all women, and not to be residents. The site of the village is a wilderness, and it offers all manner of obstacles. The community is called 'The Women's Economical Garden Homestead League,' and it is established by act of the State Legislature."